



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

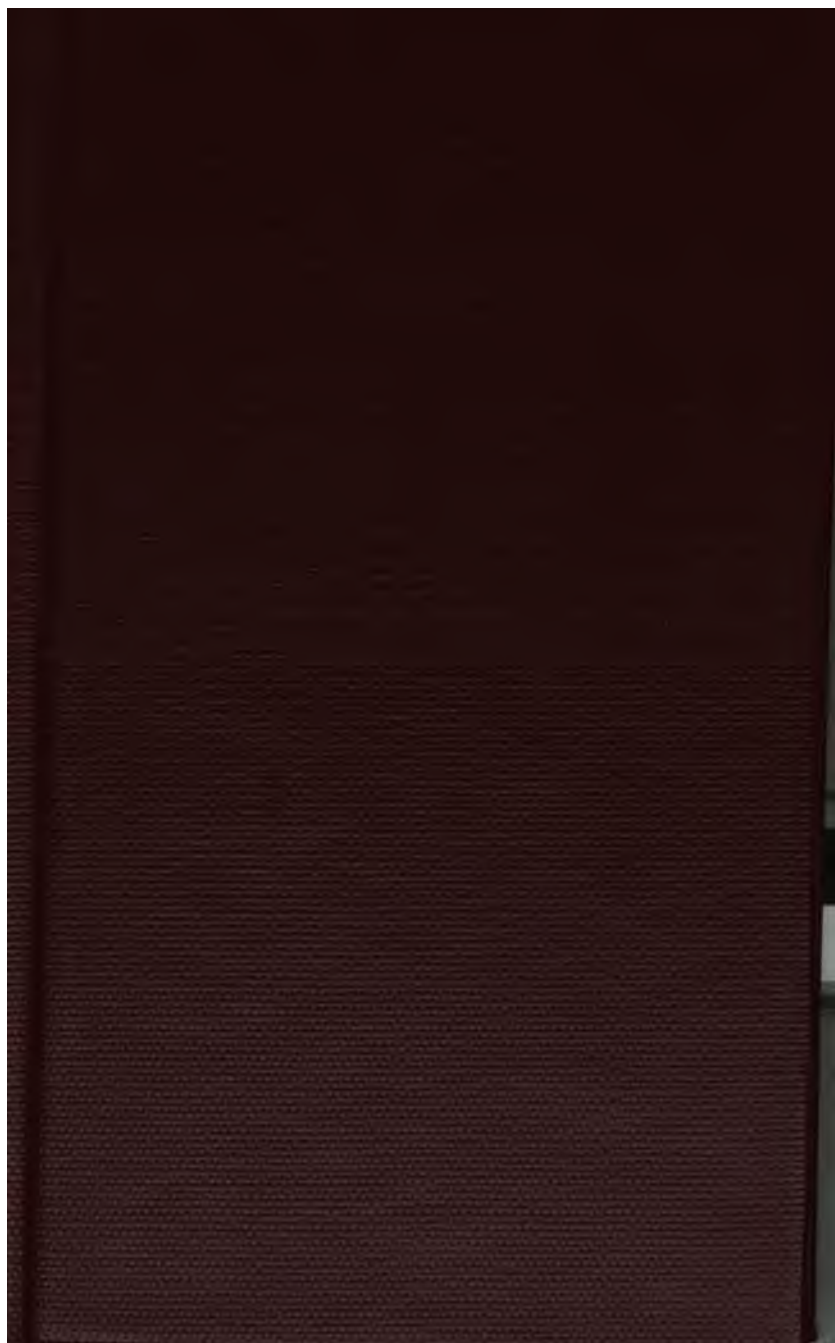
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



VS 14486.2.5

GIFT OF

THE MASSACHUSETTS
ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

 HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY 







ADMONITIONS

FROM

"THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH,"

OR

THE FALL OF RAY POTTER,

IN

TWENTY FOUR LETTERS;

Written by Himself to his Brother,

NICHOLAS G. POTTER.

joice not against me O mine enemy when I fall, I shall arise.—
h, ch vii. v. 8.

ou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken
gain, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
e LXXI, v. 20.

rist loves best, not him who has committed the fewest and the
heinous sins, but him who has the most penitent heart.—Gerrit
p. 98.

PAWTUCKET, MASS.

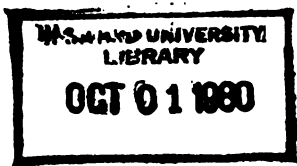
R. SHERMAN:.....PRINTER.

1838.

~~17374.64~~
US 14486.2.5

Re...
See p. 25

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year
1838, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the
United States, within and for the Rhode Island District.



PREFACE,

BY

NICHOLAS G. POTTER.

Perhaps none felt more deeply the wound than myself, on the Jews of the transgression and fall, of my sinning and unfortunate brother. Nothing, which I ever experienced, of the trials of this life, could bear a comparison, with the sensation it occasioned in my breast. This distress, was not principally occasioned, because he was my *natural brother*, but because he was my brother in *the Lord*; and because of the connexion which he held with the cause, which I hold dearer, than any earthly and natural ties. I mean the cause of Jesus. The wounding of this cause, wounded *me*; and caused me unutterable pain.—For have I ever, for a moment, hesitated in the most unequalled manner, to condemn his sin, without the least palliation.

But what could I do? Turn away from his penitential cries, and calls for mercy and forgiveness? No; I could not; I *desired* not thus to do. As I condemned him in his transgressions, and abhorred his sin, so I could but receive him in his penitence, when he implored my forgiveness. God commanded me thus to do. I still believe him to be a christian. Nor could I take any stand in respect to him, which many appear to take. That because he has sinned and fallen, he must not be permitted to speak the truth, in opposition to error. Some months after his fall, I advised him to employ his time in writing; as I conceived, that by his fall, and the transactions of the public respecting it, he was placed in a situation to bring out views, that would be serviceable to the cause of truth. He seemed backward in undertaking—wrote a little, and lingered until his imprisonment, during which, he has furnished the following communications. I believe they contain *much* truth, and from that consideration, I am in favor of giving them to the public. I do not hold myself responsible for the *facts* which he states, in relation to the treatment he has received; as they are *generally*, not within my personal knowledge. I have reason to believe, however,

that they are correct, and if they are not, those who are implicated, have a right to shew it. But as to his views, respecting the insidious, hateful foe of God, the gospel, and the souls of men, *self-righteousness*, I agree with him: and that his fall has developed, that the disease occasioned by it in the church, is alarmingly prevalent. Whether it is so extensive as he imagines, I will not pretend to determine—of this, every reader must be his own judge. To shew that it is so, however, seems to be his *prominent* aim, through the whole of these communications; and I confess, that he brings forward facts and arguments, in proof of his position, which ought to *induce reflection* and examination, into the true state of the case. There is one point in the following communications, which I unqualifiedly believe with him—and that is: that the wrath which has been poured out upon him, since his fall, legal as well as illegal, is not for his “transgression”—but the wreaking of vengeance on his head, for the stand which he formerly maintained in defending truth. As he often intimates, in the following letters, I believe his sufferings have been, and still are, very great.

I hope he and his afflicted family, will have the sympathies and prayers of the friends of the distressed. I am not at all satisfied, that the person who procured his indictment, and consequent sentence of six months imprisonment, after his confession of his sin, and prostration before God and man, in view of it, has acted the part of a minister of the gospel. In order to a proper understanding of the *design* of the following communications, it is important to understand, that the first thirteen, are a *history* of transactions connected with his fall: and the remainder, *inferences*, ostensibly designed, to throw light on the present state of the church, with the hope of doing good. If this is *not* understood, the recital of many things in the narrative, might appear uncalled for; as an unnecessary exposure of the faults of others. The exhibition of his Phrenological character, drawn by one of the most celebrated Phrenologists in the country, I hope will serve as a powerful antidote to *Phrenological pride*; and on this account, its insertion was called for; and ought not to have been dispensed with. I hope, that those whose self-righteous pride, is flattered by their *good Phrenological developments*, will especially, be admonished by his reflections on this subject, in his twenty-third communication.—But I forbear to enlarge. I hope the following letters will be read with candor; and I pray God, that they may subserve the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

Coventry, Feb. 13th 1837. NICHOLAS G. POTTER.

A REQUEST

Of the People of Pawtucket.

From the spirit of *Phariseeism* and selfish *Sectarianism*, the Author of the following communications, expects no mercy—nor a candid hearing. But, he would invoke the attention, of the disinterested and merciful, of *all sects* and parties, and of *those who have never attached themselves to any sect*, to the following pages. Especially, does he ask this, of all such, in the Village of Pawtucket. Soon after my fall, it will be remembered, that I expressed a humble desire, yet to reside in Pawtucket; even if I must be obliged to occupy the lowest place among the people of God, and the lowest walks of life; in order to shew by my future walk, that, notwithstanding my sin and fall, I did love God and his cause. It was alledged, that I could not reside there, because of the mob—but, I soon clearly saw, that there was *another power, behind the mobocratic throne*, which was *more* determined against my residence there, than the thoughtless persons, who composed the mob! I alluded to this, in my address to the people of Pawtucket last spring—and this allusion was seized upon by many, as evidence of my impenitence. I think that the *facts* exhibited in the following communications, will *demonstrate*, that I had good reason for such an allusion. The *ostensible* reason, urged by many professors, of religion, for their conduct towards me, has been, their fear of countenancing the sin of licentiousness. I desire the Pawtucket reader, after reading the following pages, in view of this *pretended* reason, to ask himself the following question—“If after Ray Potter has made a humble confession, before God and man, and asked forgiveness, certain persons, are so afraid of countenancing or fellowshiping licentiousness, that they can’t bear the thought of his being in the church of God, nor in the place, how is it, that the *same persons*, can fellowship the person, designated by the name of Archippus, *without any confession?*”^{*} This ques-

^{*}He denies having done any thing immoral.

tion is a *key*, that will unlock a door, and shew the reader, at least, a *part* of that power, behind the mobocratic throne, already alluded to. It is said, that the man who preaches where I formerly did, gave it as his opinion, that I ought not to be fellowshipped under four years. Yet he most heartily fellowships Archippus. But,—Archippus and his party, have proposed to join his *denomination*, and are about raising him *four hundred dollars* a year for preaching! O ye merciful of Pawtucket—this is a *specimen* of that pretended fear, of fellowshipping licentiousness, that has crushed me into the dust, notwithstanding all of my *begging for mercy*, and demanded my banishment from your village, and indeed, beyond the bounds of my native state. Will you countenance it? RAY PORTER:

ERRATA.

Page 21, sixth line from the top, for "soul" read "heart."

Page 24, last line, for "suffering" read "sufferings."

Page 28, fifteenth line from bottom, for "yet" read "not."

Page 40, thirteenth line from the top, for "*notwithstanding*" read "*on account of*." This is an important correction.

Page 50, ninth line from the top, take out the words "by" and "as" so that the line will stand thus—"days of Christ and the Apostles, looked upon Gentile sinners."

Page 61, sixteenth line from the top, for "literally" read "completely."

Page 64, thirteenth line from the bottom, for "*excessively*" read "*extremely*."

Page 74, before the word "*tribunal*" read "Judicial."

Page 81. The sentence marked with inverted commas, 5th and 6th lines from the bottom, should be thus read—"I have covered up and covered up, his cheating and conniving, until I have nothing left to cover up with."

Page 97, seventeenth line from the top, after the word "subdued" insert the words, "*in me*," so that the sentence will read—"subdued in me, at a less expense."

Page 107, after the word "*indicted*," twelfth line from the bottom, insert the words, "*in this state*."

Page 129, for "*Hopkinism*" read "*Hopkinsian*."

CONTENTS.

LETTER I.	page.
INTRODUCTION ; Reasons for writing &c.	8.
II.	
Natural disposition,	13.
III.	
The manner of his overthrow,	19.
IV.	
Subsequent exercises ; Confession ; <i>flees from the mob</i>	23.
V.	
Treatment received from man &c.	29.
VI.	
Farther account of afflictions and trials,	35.
VII.	
Same subject continued ; Indicted on the complaint of one of his old Ministerial friends,	45.
VIII.	
Return to Pawtucket ; ordered out of the house where he had long resided ; great distress by being mobbed &c.	50.
IX.	
Transactions of the church in relation to his case,	61.
X.	
Imprisonment ; Transactions of the Church continued.	73.
XI.	
Transactions of the Church concluded,	84.
XII.	
Merciful treatment ; Letter of Gerrit Smith,	96.

	XIII.	
Same subject continued,		104.
	INFERENCES.	
	XIV.	
The fallibility of man,		108.
	XV.	
Public Sentiment made the rule to judge of sin,		114.
	XVI.	
The views which generally prevail respecting the Gospel of Christ,		120.
	XVII.	
The present organization <i>as such</i> have no fellowship for David,		132.
	XVIII.	
Destitution of the spirit of Christ among his professed disciples.		137.
	XIX.	
Views of the present professed Christian organization,		143.
	XX.	
Developement of Sectarianism by his fall,		148.
	XXI.	
Answer to the question, "Will he rise again,"		159.
	XXII.	
Great lack in preaching the great atonement,		166.
	XXIII.	
Dangerous use of Phrenology ; Abolition, Colonization, &c.		170.
	XXIV.	
Conclusion,		177.

LETTER I.

PAWTUCKET, JUNE 10TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

In accordance with your request, I undertake to write you something of an account of my great and disgraceful fall, and of my views and exercises, in relation to it. Before I proceed, you will permit me to say, without charging me with the guilt of flattery, that I esteem as a great mercy of God, that I have a natural brother like *you*: one, who, while he gives no countenance to my sins, yet has treated me *mercifully*; in conformity with the example and precepts of Jesus; and with that *natural* affection, which the law of our nature dictates, and which true religion approves; and the destitution of which, according to the judgment of an Apostle, justly ranks a person, with the vilest of our race. I can assure you, that among the many painful considerations growing out of my transgression, that of having so deeply wounded *your* feelings, and those of my other relatives, is by no means, a trifling one. It has caused me great sorrow of heart. I pray God, to overrule it to all of your good; while he supports you under it by his grace. Indeed, if I did not fully believe, that God will ultimately bring glory to HIS NAME, and the greatest good to holy beings, out of all the moral evil which has, does, or ever will exist, I should be inconsolable in my present situation: and if I did not believe in the *infinite atonement*, made by the Lord Jesus Christ for sin; and that God through the blood of the cross, can forgive and save, the very greatest of sinners, and not dishonor himself, I should, in view of my great and heinous sins, sink into the depths of hopeless despair. *You* will not, my dear brother, make the disingenuous use of this remark, that, because I say, that God will overrule my sin,

and the sins of all his creatures, to his glory, and the greatest good of the universe, that I mean thereby in the *least*, to free myself from the guilt of it:—or, that I teach the doctrine, that we are from these views, to take the liberty to sin, that good may come out of it. No! God forbids. I have no such views—no such feelings. These views, have never in any respect, produced an extenuation in my own mind, of the *guilt* of my great and numerous sins and transgressions; or caused me to doubt for a moment, that for *each* and every one of them, I deserve eternal misery. But I ask, how could Paul be now happy in heaven, if he clearly saw, that by his sins in persecuting the saints, and his other sins, God's glory must be eternally lessened, and the holiness and happiness of the universe, forever cut short? He could *not* be. It is impossible, in the nature of things, for a *disinterested* being, to be happy in such circumstances. Yet, shall it be said, that because Paul sees, that God has overruled his sins to the glory of his name, and the greatest good of the universe; that he, (Paul,) extenuates the guilt of his transgressions? Or, that he does not now look upon his sins in their own nature, in themselves considered, with the greatest abhorrence? Or, that Paul would now tell us from heaven, if he could speak to us, to sin on freely, in order to have good brought out of it? Surely not: it would be the very height of blasphemy, thus to charge him. Why then, should I be charged with extenuating my own guilt, because I express consolation in the belief, that however I ought to be ashamed of my sin—however I, as an individual, have plunged myself into deep disgrace by it; yet, God will get to himself honor, by what he will bring out of it; as he will also overrule it, to the general good of his people. *Such* consolation, is all which I *can* have. If I cannot have consolation from such views, I never can be happy: no, not in heaven! If I were to be placed there to-day, in the very midst of the paradise of God, with the full view and assurance, that through my sins in this life, God and all his holy subjects, must suffer an eternal loss,

I could not be happy. No matter, though my sins were all forgiven. No matter, though I should not be punished for them: if, through them, God's glory must be diminished and the holiness and happiness of the universe lessened, I can but forever mourn: and I therefore reiterate, that I should be inconsolable, if I thought God would not bring glory to his name, out of my sin and shame, and consequent personal sufferings. *This*, is my comfort, let my personal disgrace and sufferings be what they may. I endeavor to state these views to you clearly, for two reasons: first—because I know that some things which I have said, in a desultory manner, in relation to them, have been most unfairly and wickedly construed; as if I were laying the blame of my sin to God; and was not troubled in view of it, because I thought God would overrule it for good:—and secondly—because I intend, as I give you the account proposed, to intersperse remarks and draw inferences, which will make it important for you, to keep the foregoing views and explanations in mind, in order to prevent misunderstanding. In what I may say, concerning ill treatment, I shall be as general as I can consistently, in my remarks; as I wish, as far as possible, to avoid the designation of individuals, and shall therefore, studiously avoid calling names. This rule I mean to observe, because I feel solemnly admonished, not to indulge in retaliation, which I think, has been a great fault of my past life, and because I do not feel *disposed*, to unnecessarily expose the faults of those who have tried to injure me the most, or my very worst enemies. My object, my *sole* object, I trust, is, to exhibit truth to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. I would not, indeed, mention the conduct of persons, who have done, apparently, all they could, to sink a fallen man still lower, if it were not for the purpose of shewing the *contrast*, between the selfish heart of *man*, and the heart of the forgiving and merciful Jesus: as well as to shew, that by my fall, one thing, at least has been developed, viz: that there is a great lack among his professed people, of the spirit of *him*, who was not ashamed to fellowship peni-

tent publicans and harlots. One thing, perhaps you are aware of;—it is generally considered, that I have *now* no right to speak the truth—I mean in respect to any one else: indeed, this is considered by many, as almost an infallible evidence of my *impenitence*; as you may have learned, was the consequence of a few words, in my address to the people of Pawtucket. When you first urgently requested me to write, I confess, that these things deterred me; but on reflection, I saw that if none were permitted to speak the truth, but those who had never *sinned*, the world never *would* have had, nor ever *will* have, any messages from God, through the instrumentality of men. And as it respects *external* transgressions, if such a rule were adopted, the 51st Psalm, and indeed, all the writings of David, after his fall, ought to be expunged from the bible; as also, the preaching of Peter! I saw that there was no validity in the rule—that the *bible* was expressly against it; and therefore consented in my mind, to comply with your request. God grant that in writing, selfishness may not dictate a single word; and that on the perusal of the whole, you may find nothing, fairly to be attributed to any other motive, than a sincere desire to advance the cause of truth, and the glory of God. One thing, I wish you to PARTICULARLY bear in your mind—I am not fighting *my own battles*;—but *making use* of my fall, and the circumstances connected with it, for the purpose of exhibiting truth. If I know any thing of my heart, this is the leading motive.

I am most affectionately Yours,
RAY POTTER.

LETTER II.

PAWTUCKET, JUNE 11TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

I think you will perceive in my fall, what no doubt, you have long before been convinced is a solemn truth—that self-righteousness, the great idol and hope of this world, is as *unsafe* a thing to *trust* in for salvation; as are the dumb idols of the heathen; and as unworthy an object of *adoration* as one of the living, intellectual ones to which they pay great respect—I mean the devil! Yet, unsafe as it is, to look to *such* a source as self-righteousness, to save us from the wrath of an offended God, and as great an abomination as it is in his holy sight, for us to present it to him as a substitute for perfect holiness, or the blood of Jesus (the sinner's only hope) yet, self-righteousness, after all, is the great false God and hope of the world; and a trust in it for salvation is continually plunging multitudes into the bottomless pit! O “how it lives” and breathes “and has its being” in the hearts of all the unregenerate? And how soon after being driven out by converting grace, will it *return*, to exalt in his own estimation the saint of God; and thus provoke the heavy chastisement of his *Heavenly Father*! It is the last thing that lets go its grasp to let us come to the feet of Jesus.—It comes in numberless *forms*, assumes numberless *positions*, tells thousands of different stories—often talks *against itself* to guard against detection and if possible intrudes itself into all of our thoughts, words and actions respecting ourselves. I have often thought its character for *life* is well illustrated by that of a certain kind of *fish*, that after it is *skinned*, its *head* taken off, its *bowels* taken out, and its *body* severed in pieces, and deposited in the *frying-pan* will shew signs of life! Dangerous foe to the souls of men! Sure damnation to all who are not saved from it! O my brother does it reign in you? I hope not.

Better, far better, had you be in my situation of degradation if such a situation might be sanctified to the weakening of such an abomination in the sight of a holy God than to possess the fairest character on earth while clad in *heart* with such a garment, with such *filthy rags*. And what is this self-righteousness on which so many are resting their hopes for a long eternity? Why its foundation is in the mere external conduct of man : and it substitutes the acting out of the mere animal propensities, or what may be termed the natural disposition, for that holiness of *heart* required by the pure unbending law of God. Now, I desire to shew you, how, in my case this "Dagon" of self-righteousness has been made to fall and lose its head : to *my* shame and disgrace certainly ; but to the glory of God and I hope the great good of my soul. In respect to *natural disposition* I may safely say that if any might hope for the favor of God on such a ground I might perhaps stand with them an equal chance :—yet where am I now?—Now as self-righteousness builds its hope principally on what is termed the natural disposition or *make* ; and as it is on the *natural propensities* that temptations to commit external acts of sin are fastened, I will give you an account of my own natural make ; for the double purpose of shewing how easily the glory of such a righteousness may be spoiled; even in the view of man; and also of shewing more clearly the manner in which I was overthrown. S. N. Fowler a celebrated Phrenologist of New York, in the course of a conversation with him not long since incidentally gave me a most striking account of my natural disposition. I was an entire stranger to him—and was raising some objections to the science when he did it, but was so forcibly struck with its correctness in many particulars, that I requested him to write it down. I will give it to you in his own words as being as correct a delineation as I could give myself—and this I do without endorsing the infallibility of the science. At first thought, I felt a shrinking from giving you this account, but I think I soon traced this unwillingness to *pride* influencing me

with the fear that it might be construed into an attempt to *patch up* myself in my shattered state : but as the reverse is true, that is, I intend to shew that the best natural disposition (not that I consider mine so,) that ever was possessed by a fallen child of Adam, is nothing but a stench in the nostrils of a holy God when offered as a ground of his justification and salvation, I shall not hesitate. The apostle takes a similar course in his epistle when he shews what he was before conversion in order to shew more clearly the insufficiency of self-righteousness for salvation and to exalt the higher the glorious gospel. This is my sole object—and indeed *the leading one* from beginning to end of the account which I am undertaking to give you. Some of the terms of the Phrenologist are liable to misconstruction. For instance where he speaks of *benevolence* he is not to be understood as meaning holiness : but only *natural generosity*. Theologically speaking, benevolence and holiness are synonymous—but certainly I never had any benevolence in *this sense* of the term until after I was born again. He speaks of my being religious from a boy.—This depends on what is meant by the *term* religion.—Most certainly I had no saving religion until I was about seventeen years old. My religion previous to that was no better than that of Paul's before *his* conversion ; in speaking of which he says, After the straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. But I premise no more.

PHRENOLOGICAL OPINION,

of the character of Ray Potter—by S. N. Fowler of N. Y.

Mr Potter has an active temperament and is always busy. He is full of feeling and thought. The most prominent organs in his head are conscientiousness, benevolence and firmness. He is *very* conscientious and could not for his life be persuaded to do that which is wrong. He is always looking at the wrong and right and is sometimes over scrupulous about little things. On reflection he lets little sins swell into great ones, and would sacrifice any thing and every thing for duty and principle. He bears

down upon the guilty and gives the wicked no peace.— He is mild yet *very* strict. He draws nice distinctions between right and wrong and is always enforcing truth and duty. He is not satisfied to have men do *about* right; but wants every man to toe the mark and stand to his post.

He is a bold soldier in every thing he undertakes. He generally hits, but sometimes aims too high but never too low. His moral courage is very great; he is very firm and sometimes stubborn. He cannot be *made* to change when he thinks he is right. He is deliberative but sure to accomplish. He is slow to believe any thing new; yet *when* he believes he does it with a whole soul. Benevolence being very large, he takes great pleasure in doing good and promoting the happiness of man. He always wishes to do good on a large scale and is never backward but sometimes *too* forward and ready. He is liberal in his feelings and has considerable charity; yet he is true to his church and is a firm disciple and a strong pillar. His benevolence being very large and his moral feelings generally large united with strong ambition—he would find it impossible to settle down and provide only for himself and family. He has always had a desire to engage in public business. His happiness is greatly augmented when he is doing good to his country and promoting the spiritual welfare of mankind. His domestic feelings are all strong—he is very fond of friends, of his wife and children. He is always interested in the society of ladies and takes great pains to please and accommodate them. He finds it easy to secure their attention and affection and always passes well in their society. He is more inclined to cultivate the intellect of the other (female) sex than to foster their pride and vanity. His philoprogenitiveness giving him parental feelings and a fondness for children he is well calculated to please and instruct them and promote their happiness. He is naturally kind to every thing in a helpless condition whether young or old. He is a good provider and takes good care of domestic animals. His adhesiveness being large enables him to form strong attachments—a desire to

love, a propensity to associate and become attached. He is not only pleased to be in the society of others but strongly inclined to associate and is very partial to his friends and is sometimes too much prejudiced in favor of his friends and party. He is spirited, forcible, active and very industrious. He is not fond of contention yet rather fond of debate and finds it difficult to sit down and converse without making an opponent. He is always effectual in his measures and is severe when necessary. He can be severe and is sometimes sarcastic. When he is excited he is too blunt and plain and expresses himself without due regard to time and place. He is more cautious about what he does than what he says, his caution being larger than his secretiveness. He can easily abstain from any kind of food which is injurious—and if he is a temperance man he is a whole hearted one—he neither touches tastes nor handles. He loves money for its means and regards it as the means of happiness and not as the end of happiness. He may be saving of property yet he gives liberally when he can accomplish good by it. He is not very proud yet he is very ambitious to be distinguished as a moral man and as a moral leader. He takes pleasure in doing good for the sake of it and for the name of it. Approbativeness and conscientiousness being large he is very zealous in every moral cause and sometimes too enthusiastic. His future is very strong—he is constantly looking forward to a future state of existence and considering himself and others nothing but pilgrims in this world. He never was disposed to reject the evidences of christianity and the doctrines of the bible. His mind is always open to conviction. He would be liable to believe too much rather than too little. He is more of a philosopher than a poet and has more sentimental feeling than imagination and fancy. His imitation is large—he is considerably inclined to imitate, represent and describe. In speaking he would use many gestures. He is a good hand to set off a subject and make it appear natural. He is quite a contriver and a great planner, but is not so good to execute or handle tools; he is more

of a theorist than a practitioner. His reasoning and moral faculties being strong he would be very fond of metaphysics and moral philosophy. He is always at home when talking on moral subjects. His general method of reasoning is by analogy and comparison. Veneration and comparison give him the disposition to compare the old testament with the new—and old times with the present—also to draw conclusions from what has been and what is, and thus to judge of the future. He has a great regard for antiquity and superiority, age and things sacred and holy. He is devotional in his feelings and was religious and strictly conscientious from a boy. He was always afraid of sinning against God and doing wrong. He always believes in the providence of God—in signs and appearances and sees a great many resemblances between the old testament and the new. The judgments of God towards the ungodly and his special mercy towards the righteous and his general dealings towards mankind. He is always watching the signs of the times and is much disposed to prophesy. He seldom fails in his judgment of what will take place and can determine long before hand the result of things. His judgment is better than his memory—he can recollect thoughts and principles but not details. He can give ideas in his own language but not in the language of the author—nor can he recollect where or when he saw it.—He is a poor judge of colors and sings more for his own amusement than he does to keep time in music or make melody. He is more of a thinker than an observer. His language is large—he is a great talker, he always has something to say, and is sometimes too wordy. As a reasoner he finds it difficult to keep his mind to the point and connect his thoughts and regulate his feelings. His first thoughts are always his best—his mind always gets confused by close and continued application. He is rather odd in his expressions and is sometimes witty. His moral sentiments have the ascendancy over all the other faculties.

S. N. FOWLER,

of New York.

I think that you, who have known me from my infancy will recognize this picture to be strikingly correct in many particulars. I *know* it to be generally so: yet I know full well, that in all of it there is not one *particle of holiness*.—Still here is the God of the self-righteous—I mean this is their saviour: and who among the Pharisaical throng had by nature a more shining God to worship than your now fallen and disgraced brother? But few: still I have long known that it was a filthy thing in the sight of a holy God, and a stench in his nostrils when offered as our justification. I say I have long known it—and many, many times have been deeply affected in view of it; yet after all self-righteousness would urge me from time to time even up to the day of my fall to look at this picture with self-complacency and boasting. How much have I sinned in this way! My dear brother, beware: for I feel as if my fall in no small degree is designed as a chastisement for this sin. “He that exalteth himself shall be abased” remains true and will so remain until every saint is humbled in the dust and every proud impenitent sinner, thrust down to hell! I praise God that he did not suffer me to go on in self-righteous pride, but has brought me down to his feet; although the stroke has been terrible to myself and many others. In my next I shall give you something of an account of this and the manner of my overthrow. In the mean time I hope you will be thankful for preserving grace and recollect “that in” us “that is in” our “*flesh dwelleth no good thing!*”

Your affectionate brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER III.

PAWTUCKET, JUNE 12TH, 1837.

My dear Brother:—

In my last I observed that it is on the natural propensities that temptations to commit external acts of

sin generally take hold. In the description of my natural disposition, you observed that of "*strong adhesiveness enabling me to form strong attachments; a desire to love, a propensity to associate and become attached.*" Now, this is strictly true of me. Never perhaps was there a person, more ardently attached to friends than myself. It has led me, no doubt, to be blind to the failings and sins of certain men whom I have for years most affectionately loved, to that degree that I have wickedly suffered sin upon them and not rebuked them as I should have done. This trait in my character, of strong attachment to friends, has not only been made a snare to me in respect to *men*, in the manner I have just hinted but in it was laid the snare, by the enemy of all righteousness, that finally resulted in my overthrow, and dreadful fall. Although, there was in this case from the first a *personal appearance* that was peculiarly agreeable, yet the overwhelming force of the temptation seemed to lie in an exceedingly strong attachment, created by a course of christian conduct and *extraordinary kindness* to me. Never was the remark of a certain writer more completely illustrated than in my case—"even grace itself became a snare!" O that all would take warning and beware of this rock. Now the ground of my fall has hardly been understood at all—for those who have had it in their hearts to do me all the *injury* they could, have represented my character, to be that of a disposition to indulge in illicit intercourse with the other sex where I could find liberty. God knows, there is not a word of truth in the allegation. In my confession I spoke of having been under temptations for about ten years to commit that sin. Now I did not mean that in the whole course of that time I ever *once* thought, that I should commit adultery—but that this sensual gratification seemed exceedingly pressing—and in this respect I cannot be made to believe, perhaps, that ever a person had so powerful an inclination for indulgence. O how plainly can I now see, that at this *weak place* satan bent all of his force to overwhelm me! It has been said that I ought not to have

gone in the way of temptation. That is very true—I ought not. And furthermore, I ought not to have suffered an unholy *thought*, nor an inordinate desire to have place for a moment at any time nor in any circumstances. That is all true: and it is just *as* true that every person ought every moment to give their soul to God. That the worldly minded professor ought this moment to turn his heart away from earthly objects and love God supremely. I am not denying what I *ought* to have done, but shewing what I did do: and how poor human nature in its vaunted glory was overcome; and that it will inevitably be overcome in *every person* under heaven, even to the commission of external acts of wickedness if the temptation is suited to its appetite and if it be not rescued by the *efficient agency of the spirit of God!* Instead of boasting, “LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL.” I could give a most extraordinary account of my peculiar circumstances in relation to this subject but I forbear. A wrong construction might be put on many things and among others it might look like an attempt to extenuate the guilt of my transgression; and I wish never to do any thing of that kind. I have sinned and take to myself the whole *guilt* and *shame* of it; without the least extenuation or palliation. As I was remarking I never once thought, up to the time of my fall of committing adultery—the external act; yet I knew that I was guilty of awfully sinning against God, especially in *heart*, according to the declaration of our saviour Matt. 5—28. O how much of this will appear in those whose exterior is now fair, in the day of Judgment! It caused me anguish of spirit which I can never describe. I now learned, by most painful experience the true import of the following expressions of the Apostle Paul in the 7th chapt. of Romans. “For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” My dear brother, it does seem to

me that no soul ever had a more painful experience than myself in the warfare here described. How plainly *old* I see in the course of this terrible conflict that the heart of man consists in exercises—and that the heart of a saint consists in a train of holy and unholy exercises. Sometimes I would rise upon the wings of love and faith; loathe and abhor all unholy thoughts, and feelings and desires with utter abhorrence which words cannot express, and anon be overwhelmed with the rolling waves of passion within. But I fell—and in a manner most extraordinary. I designed at first to give you a particular account here, but the cry of indelicacy from some of my friends and some other considerations have stopped me. Perhaps it is as well: nevertheless I greatly desired to state things more fully not only to shew the terrible conflict between conscientiousness and the fear of doing wrong on the one hand and appetite on the other, but also to explain in relation to a charge which some have made against me of *lying* in relation to this transaction. If any candid persons wish for further explanations here I will make them personally—and as for those who are greedy to charge me with lying, regardless of any explanation I can only say *I am innocent of the charge*. I cannot forbear adverting here to the injured person who fell with me in transgression. I consider myself *far the most criminal*. There have been some few instances of those who I believe are friendly to me representing it otherwise. Such representations are exceedingly unjust to her and grievous to my feelings—and I am glad to think that the generality of my friends have avoided them. I hope you my dear brother and all my *relatives* will avoid them. What can be more despicable and beneath honorable minds than to seek to excuse me by defaming her—I know something of the effects of such a course of conduct by most bitter experience and I pray that you and all of my relatives may be preserved from it. Let me have the blame of all that belongs to me; only remember to shew *mercy* according to the command of God. But to return: was it my duty to make *public* confession

of this sin unless brought to light by the providence of God? I certainly thought not, then—and think so still : but to repent of it before God, and sin no more. I have been condemned by some because I did not make it public—but I considered that I had no right to do so on account of the other party if nothing more: and I acted accordingly. I humbled myself before God in view of what I had done and implored forgiveness. I cannot express to you the anguish of my soul for months; nor the earnestness with which I sought the divine favor. I implored an interest in the prayers of God's people and improved every opportunity to engage with them in social prayer, that God would have mercy on me, and preserve me from the triumphs of Satan and an ungodly world. Many, no doubt, now recollect these strong importunities and supplications, although they were then unconscious of the reason of my great distress. I eventually did find great divine support. *That* God, who washes away the *crimson* sins of all who humble themselves before him and supplicate his mercy, in the name of Jesus had mercy on me—and before I knew the *result* of the transaction, I enjoyed, I humbly hope, the divine favor, and felt given up to God in a manner that I had not for years before. During this time, I most earnestly begged of God that my conduct might not be made public, to the great dishonor of his cause and the rending of the hearts of thousands of his people. But he determined otherwise.

Your affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER IV.

PAWTUCKET, JUNE 17, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

You will not expect me to give you an adequate description of my feelings when I was assured of the result of my sin. I think you will readily apprehend, that *this* would be impossible. You may conceive more, much more than I can convey in *language*; and after all, *year*

conceptions or those of any other person but myself must be vague and imperfect. In this case, it may be said with the utmost propriety that my 'soul knew alone its own bitterness. Having been converted to God for four and twenty years, I had ever loved his precious cause. Since I had been a preacher, no temptation of this world's good, or ease; nor the approbation of man had ever been able to turn me aside from that course of duty which I conceived to be required at my hands; but after all I had sinned and fallen! Yes I had *fallen*. Then, the wound inflicted on the dear cause of God, was held up to my view in an aspect most heart rending and overwhelming. Then, did a sense of the injury inflicted on the person who had fallen with me, and the family, most of whom I sincerely loved roll over my distressed soul like the mountain waves of the storm troubled deep—then, did my mind anticipate the dreadful intelligence, as it would fall on the ears of thousands of distant friends, made dear to me by long intimacy in the cause of Anti Slavery, and other benevolent enterprises. Then did I look on my poor afflicted wife and family, in view of what was coming with such feelings of soul, and unspeakable heart aching sympathy, as I pray God you may never know by experience. Ah, *what* would not have *melted*, with a full view of my wretchedness in that awful hour? *any* thing but the heart of man!—But O the Church—the Church! The fruit of seventeen years toil! Never were a Minister and Church more closely united; and never was love for each other more reciprocally sincere, and deep rooted perhaps :—cemented by a thousand *common* trials and deeply engraven with the pen of affliction on my heart and I trust on theirs—and must this message fall on their ears? Yes it must! Dear brother, how can I help weeping as long as I live, even to *think* of the thousand streams of anguish which from various sources poured in upon my poor oppressed soul in view of the promulgation of my sin to the world? And what could ever have *supported* me, but the gracious hand of a most merciful God! As to my own suffering, at the hand of man, it

though *those* in my estimation were small when compared with other results ; yet I had good reason to believe they would be great. My whole course, as a preacher, had been calculated to awaken against me the indignation and wrath of multitudes. You know the course I pursued in relation to masonry. How much wrath was pent up in the hearts of thousands, ready to seize every and any opportunity to burst upon me for the part I acted in relation to this institution. I had been most actively engaged, from an early date, in the cause of Anti-Slavery which had rendered me extremely obnoxious to the indignation of many, who disregarded the rights of the abused people of color. I had unsparingly condemned, in my preaching, whatever I considered wrong doctrinally and practically, which had offended great multitudes and my peculiar situation as standing aloof from all denominations rendered me a most loathsome object in the view of strong sectarians. Now, I could but foresee (what has come to pass) that the moment my sin and fall were made public, all of the long contracted hatred and disposition to revenge, which from these various causes had been accumulating against me would burst upon me under the pretence of condemning me for my sin. Can you, in imagination, place yourself in something like my situation before my confession? with all these scenes before me? O it was a situation indeed of which I know you cannot form adequate views : and why should I, put you to fruitless toil—I leave it. But through the mercy of God I did not hesitate. From the very first moment that I was assured of the true state of the case I was determined on an honest scriptural confession, and to leave the consequence with God. I had before determined to sin no more; and I as fully *now* determined to make a public confession of my sin, and ask forgiveness of all whom I had injured by my transgression. What more *could* I do? Nothing. And did not duty call me to do this? I thought so then and think so still:—yet strange as it may appear, I was condemned by some for what was thought this early confession. It was argued that in the providence of God,

things might transpire which would preclude the necessity of making it public; and thus those who would be affected by it, saved from disgrace. But I considered the circumstances of the case such as *then* demanded a public confession—and without evasion or delay I determined to make it. Accordingly I wrote a confession* to the church with a request that it might be read at the first meeting, and in public on the next sabbath. I confessed my sin verbally to my wife and children who were at home, and besought their forgiveness; and wrote to my children who were absent. I sent you the heart rending news by letter immediately: and I also sent in a confession to the Baptist church in this village, with a request that it might be read before the church and congregation on the Sabbath. This request however was denied. On Saturday evening I went personally, before the church. O what an evening, what a meeting was this! I followed the spontaneous feelings of my soul on that solemn evening in my conduct; and conversation. I first made a statement of my case and and implored mercy and forgiveness. I then felt moved upon to fall upon my knees in their midst, and ask mercy of them; and finally to address every individual personally, with a confession and petition for forgiveness. When their minds were expressed, all said by rising, that they freely forgave me but two. But this act of *forgiveness* was *taken back* subsequently by some of them, of which I may more fully speak at another time. *Now* the storm began to burst upon me with all its wonted fury; and in view of personal danger, by the hand of violence, I left my family and home, to find a refuge under the roof of some merciful friend: and hope dictated that *your* house dear brother, would under God be such a covert as I needed, in my wretched condition. Thanks be to God that I was not disappointed.—But what were my feelings, views and exercises, in this hour of deep degradation in view of the world? in the day, of, as one says my “great and dreadful fall.” And here the account which I shall give you, will hardly appear credible:—‘nevertheless I shall tell you the truth.’ Con-

*See Appendix.

sider my situation when on my journey to your house. A few days before I was called (imprudently to be sure) by my friends the John Bunyan of the age; now, none more degraded scarcely than me! But yesterday and many seemed to think me almost infallible in my religious walk; now, almost all were ready to look upon me as corrupt *root* and *branch*, and from first to last, an arrant hypocrite. But yesterday, multitudes were ready in various ways to seek my approbation and assistance, to day, scarcely the mortal to be found, who is not ashamed to be found in my company. But yesterday and I was eulogized from the press, as eminent for moral courage in the vindication of truth, and an undeviating attachment to the cause of religion and humanity; to day the "song of the drunkard" "a by word and reproach" among the people wherever I was known—forsaken by almost all who had formerly professed to be my friends—threatened by the mob with personal violence—poor and destitute of a dollar on earth that I could call my own; and this in the dead of winter; and obliged in such circumstances to leave my poor, afflicted and heart broken family: I say consider this and you will be astonished that on my journey to your house, I distinctly had this reflection "that I would not so far as my *own soul's state* was concerned be placed back where I was six months before, if I could, by saying so, have effected it. This dear brother is true. For years had I at times besought God most earnestly to make me more like Jesus Christ—and for months before my fall, I with great earnestness begged God to accomplish this in me, *let it cost me what it would in this life*; and I now felt that this most desirable of all things was accomplished in me. O my brother the time had not been for years when I felt so completely given up to God, as I did when on that lonely journey to your house, with the loss of almost every thing, that those who hope for enjoyment in the things of this life, think desirable. *Yes surely, the day of my fall in the view of the world, was the day of my rising with my saviour and God!* O how little does man know how God views things. These

exercises, were not the result of an *unconsciousness* of my great sin against God; nor of the great injury it had inflicted on his cause, and on my friends and fellow men—nor, that I did not realize the great calamity it had brought upon myself. No; I had a heart rending view of *all these things*, and felt most sensibly what one said in respect to it; that mine was “*a great and dreadful fall.*” But these originated in an assurance, that there was then nothing between me and my God—that the snares which had so long distressed me, and hindered my spiritual enjoyment and conformity to Christ, were destroyed; and that my *destruction* had proved my *salvation*! O my dear brother, how paradoxical must this statement appear to those who know nothing of the warfare of a christian; who, while contending with fleshly lusts is often made to cry out, “O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” but to those who know something by experience of the weight of this burden, who are often made to cry out, “when I would do good, evil is present with me,” and who often pant for deliverance, with groanings that cannot be uttered and often feel as if they were willing to “suffer the greatest evil rather than commit the least sin,” I say unto such, the account which I here give of my exercises may yet be wholly unintelligible. Let me not be understood here as teaching, that we may do evil, that good may come. I abominate such a sentiment—you will remember my preliminary explanations. But the fear of being by some falsely accused of this, shall never induce me to hide the glorious truth that God can and does overrule evil for good, and bring glory out of it to His holy name: and one thing do I know—yes I *know by experience* that my dreadful fall, through the boundless riches of grace in Christ Jesus, had this salutary, effect on my soul. Nor was this a momentary transitory emotion; but has been abiding with me ever since. While dwelling in your house, I gave you something of an account of my exercises; and since then my enjoyment in God has not decreased. Driven off from every thing else—in almost an unparalleled manner, made

a target for the whole artillery of earth and hell to shoot at, at pleasure, and for their own *amusement*, I have found Jesus to be unto me as an hiding place from the wind a covert from the tempest and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." O how precious has his word been to me in the day of my calamity? especially the book of Psalms. In the mercy of God, through the infinite atonement made for sin by the great Redeemer, is my only hope; and in the light of his glorious promises to the vilest of sinners, who repent and turn to Him, do I see light; and hope for eternal life! O thou merciful God how true it is that thy mercy endureth forever; and that there is no other name given under heaven, or among men, whereby we can be saved but by the name of Jesus. All our righteousness is as filthy rags and our salvation is of the Lord. So indeed can I say with the utmost propriety; and O that it may ever be with commensurate humility. Having shewn you something of the dealings of God with me in the hour of my great affliction and calamity on account of my sin, I shall in my next, give you a limited account of the treatment I have received at the hand of man.

I remain most affectionately Yours,
RAY POTTER.

LETTER V.

PAWTUCKET, JUNE 26, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

In my last, I promised to give you in my "next, a limited account of the treatment I have received at the hand of man since my fall." Let me premise, that in doing this, I have no consciousness of being actuated by any other motive than that of exhibiting truth, in order that error may be corrected and God glorified thereby. I think I am not at all influenced by a spirit of revenge, or animosity towards any individuals. I shall call no names;—and to avoid personalities *indirectly*, I shall be more *general* in my remarks than I otherwise should be. But I

cannot withhold this general statement. As I have already hinted the reflection that I myself have sinned, does not in my opinion make it my duty to hide this part of the story—for, if none but those who have never *sinned*, must be permitted to declare the truth, why, then, the mouths of all *men* must be shut; and we must look for an angelic mission to accomplish so desirable an object. To be sure, I am ashamed of my fall—I abhor my sin that occasioned it; and feel utterly unworthy to speak at all in reference to the cause of God and truth; but, if by my fall “the thoughts of many hearts have been revealed,” and if in consequence of it great and important developments have been made, in respect to the present state of the professed Christian Church, most certainly such developments ought most wisely to be improved—and for the accomplishment of this end *you* desired me to write you—and in complying with your request, *I have no other object in view.*

You well know, what the declarations of a gracious God, are, in respect to the vilest of sinners who turn to HIM and cry for mercy:—that he will receive them most freely—“blot out their sins as a thick cloud;” “abundantly pardon” them; and make *them* as white as snow whose sins have been of a scarlet and crimson die. You know, that he has given practical demonstration, of the sincerity and truth of these declarations under the old as well as new Testament dispensations by receiving graciously the greatest of sinners, who had not previously been converted; as he did also those who had *backslidden* from him and had fallen into the grossest immoralities. Look at Manassah and David: look at Mary Magdalen and the penitent thief, and see but an epitome of the “glory of his grace” in the salvation of the chief of sinners: and of the conduct of *him* who most certainly is a safe example for his professed disciples to imitate, in their conduct towards their fellow men. But, what was the conduct of the great body of christian professors towards me in the day of my fall, while confessing my sins to them, and humbly imploring their forgiveness? It is with the utmost grief, that I state

it to you—my God knows that I would gladly pass it by and never even whisper it to *you* if I did not think that it exhibits a state of things in the Church that most imperiously calls for correction. What, then, was that conduct? Why, *that of denying me mercy!* and that which was directly calculated to drive me to despair of the mercy of God forever; or, of any favors ever being shewn me by man! You know, that *one* great object which all professed christians, *profess* to have in view, is, to be instrumental in the salvation of sinners: especially, is *this* the business of ministers; but I testify that the course of conduct pursued towards *me* was directly calculated in *itself considered* to sink my soul in endless despair! This, I say in view of that day when I must meet my God and render a strict account of what I now state. It is a truth that out of the five or six hundred christian professors in this region, not more than perhaps ten or twelve, excepting those of the church of which I was pastor, have ever spoken to me a single word of mercy—nor have they ever come near me:—but, inasmuch as there can be no *neutral* ground in respect to this case, any more than in respect to any other, their whole influence has been calculated to *sink* me—and this would have certainly been accomplished, if a God of infinite mercy, had not vouchsafed to me an assurance of *His* favor which men nor devils could not invalidate. No thanks to *them* that I am not by their frowns driven to desperation—no thanks to *them* that I am not “swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” Suppose, if as many have seemed determined to make the public believe, that I always had been a hypocrite, when I appeared before them imploring mercy and forgiveness, was it not *their* duty to have labored with me in the spirit of *him* who brought *them* to repentance, and to have tried also to have brought *me* to repentance? Suppose my repentance was not genuine; and I had no true humility; was it not *their* duty to have labored with me to convince me of my *delusion*; and to have saved my soul? Surely I have an *immortal* soul; and such a time ought to have been considered a *favora-*

ble one, to have been instrumental in saving it. But no attempt of this kind, dear brother, was made by this vast body of the professed disciples of him who came into the world to save the *chief of sinners*. They came not near me—not a single settled minister of the gospel in all this region came near me—I sent my confession to them, and thereby (as I could not have the privilege to walk the streets to do it personally,) I fell at their feet and asked them to forgive me; and the *return* has been, at best, a silent *frown* driving me away from *their* doors of mercy, and in numerous instances a most apparent readiness to aggravate the circumstances of my fall, and thus to plunge me lower and lower in the depths of wretchedness and wo.—It is difficult to make *me* believe, that there ever has been a case, of the fall of any person, concerning which so many utterly unfounded statements have been made, as that of your sinning brother. You have knowledge of this in part; but the whole extent of it is beyond your conception. To these statements, however false, ministers and professors in general have seemed to lend a ready listening ear, and to draw inferences of my criminality accordingly, *without hearing a word from me by way of denial or explanation*. In multitudes of instances, the reports would be “lies out of whole cloth,” in others, caricatures, distortions and misconstructions; like an instance which I alluded to in my “Address to the People of Pawtucket,” respecting certain covenants which you have undoubtedly read. Now I ask you in all candor, if this is the way that a man in my situation should have been dealt with? What, if it should finally appear in the great day of God, that I had been a child of God more than twenty years—that I had spent many days and years in his service—that, though I had grievously sinned against God and wounded his cause, yet I was truly penitent, and had found forgiveness with God and was owned by him as freely as was the returning prodigal—I say, suppose all this shall appear to have been the true state of the case when I made my confession; in that day when God shall judge the secrets of all hearts,

I ask, how will these persons meet *their* conduct in peace? Did I not come to their feet? Did I not confess my sin? Did I not implore their forgiveness? Did not the word of God *command* them to forgive me? Connected with the awful denunciation that "they shall have judgment without mercy who will shew no mercy?" But I digress. God is the judge; and I beseech him to bring those to repentance who have sinned in respect to this awful case and save them from future wrath. I again reiterate, that I make not this statement from a spirit of retaliation—but for the sole purpose of bringing into view what I have found by most bitter and sorrowful *experience* to be lamentably lacking in the professed church of God. I mean the *spirit of Jesus*—or, in other words the *spirit of mercy and forgiveness*. I shall not enter into a detail of particular instances of unmerciful dealings with me. The transactions are most of them fresh in the public mind: and, I could not thus do, without pointing out many individuals as definitely as if I were to call their names. I will only say that in many instances those who have *held me by the throat* with the most inexorable grasp, have been those who *themselves* have been guilty of similar transgressions. But why this course of conduct towards me? I have already given you a clue to it. My peculiar course before my fall solves this question. Now was an opportunity, under the color and with the pretence of condemning me for my sin, of pouring retaliating vengeance on my head for my anti-masonic and anti-slavery course. Now was an opportunity under the color of acting with a holy indignation against my sin for many at least to *let me die*, and so be out of the way of those who had been troubled with my course in standing aloof from, and finding fault with their different denominations. Now was an opportunity for those who had long harbored grudges against me because I had condemned *their* sins, under the pretence of opposing me for *my* wickedness, to visit with wrath the man that had once reproved them: And now ESPECIALLY was there an opportunity for those who did not dare to imitate Jesus,

who in spite of the *bad name* which the self righteous Pharisees gave him for it, would show mercy and fellowship to penitent publicans and harlots. I say now was an opportunity for those who did not dare to imitate his conduct to **EXCUSE THEMSELVES FOR NOT DOING IT UNDER THE PRETENCE OF FEARING THE FELLOWSHIP OF INIQUITY!** In short, perhaps no man could have been found in the whole land, who in a fallen state like me, combined so many obstacles from the selfishness of man, to his *rising again* as myself: and none more unlikely to engage efforts from any other source than that of the *most disinterested love*, for his restoration. And may we not see the hand of God in this? that the real state of the church of God and the heart of man might be made more fully to appear in their dealings towards a fellow sinner in such a forlorn state? O my brother, how little of this precious disinterested love to God and man, is to be found even in the heart of the Church of God! Who can tell what a vast amount of what in ordinary cases passes for the pure religion of Jesus, will be found at last to be nothing but selfishness in disguise! However, let us hope for the best. Do not once think, that I mean even to intimate that those who have offered me the treatment at which I have just hinted in the day of my calamity, are all destitute of religion. No—God forbid—I hope better things—still, such a course of conduct is alarming; and most certainly affords reasonable ground to fear, that many who stand fair in the christian church, having never sinned as *I* have, are after all destitute of the “spirit of Christ,” and consequently can be “none of his;” and that even real christians are generally much infected with the leaven of the Pharisees—I mean self righteousness; which always is accompanied with an unforgiving disposition of heart. May God open the eyes of his people to see this *great sin* in the church; which all of our moral reformers have overlooked.

I remain Yours,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER VI.

PAWTUCKET, SEPT. 27TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

The contents of my last, were painful for *me* to relate, as they were no doubt, distressing to you to contemplate, and the recital of them in the hearing of those whom they implicate, would, no doubt be urged by them as irrefragable proof, that I am entirely destitute of humility in view of my *own* sin. Be it so; then assuredly these persons ought to be consistent and reject all the Psalms of David written after *his* fall which in any way reprove *others*, for their sins. Be it so, that the recital of them proves *me* destitute of humility—and that I have *now* no right as some of them have asserted to use an argument, (!!) yet, this will never disprove, that these facts themselves, are an incontrovertible argument, that they have gone counter to the plain command of God in their treatment of me. If not, what is meant by that expression of the apostle Paul—“Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of MEEKNESS; CONSIDERING THYSELF, LEST THOU ALSO BE TEMPTED.” If not, what mean the many pointed declarations of the Savior of the same import—and especially of that one where, as if to guard against all the *excuses* which an unforgiving spirit would be likely to resort to in order to get clear of this duty, the great Redeemer connects the obligation of forgiveness with the offenders own testimony—if he SAYS he repent thou shalt forgive him—and to forgive him too as God for Christ’s sake forgives us:—which certainly means nothing less than receiving him into our fellowship. I say, if this conduct towards me has been right what mean all these commands? They are null and void! But are they! No! The awful dec-

larations of Christ recorded in the last part of the 18th C. of Matthew, in the parable, yet remains to be the word of God: and not a christian duty is more clearly stated in the whole bible, nor more solemnly urged by the threatening of damning penalties, than this of the forgiveness of those who cry to us for mercy. And yet, multitudes seem to think that they may live in the habitual transgression of *this* command, with all of its concomitant aggravations, and die peacefully and go to heaven! But Christ says that HIS word shall judge us in the last day: and what does his word say concerning every one who will not from his HEART forgive his brother his trespasses?—Surely, if such may go to heaven, then may habitual impenitent adulterers, thieves, liars, and murderers go safely there; if we judge by the *word of God*—but I digress again; and rather anticipate an improvement which I intend, of this melancholy story. I shall delight to tell you presently, of some admirable exceptions in the conduct of a number of persons to that which I have been describing—most beautifully illustrating the *nature of the religion of Jesus*; breaking forth in forgiving mercy to a poor fallen, wretched and imploring sinner. This to your view, will be like a beautiful Oasis in the midst of a barren desert; and will no doubt serve to lead your mind again, as I doubt not it often has been led before, to admire the forgiving mercy of the adorable Jesus in washing away your own sins in *his* own most precious blood. But before I proceed to this, I beg the privilege of making a farther statement of some of the afflictions and trials which followed me after my fall—that the great mercy of God in my preservation, from being entirely swallowed up, may appear the more glorious. I cannot however be very minute; and as for fully portraying all, which my soul has endured, that I have already intimated to you is out of the question. Great have been my sufferings; but *how* great you nor none else can ever know but by experience. God save you from *such* a knowledge. After my confession was publicly read and the note of triumph had rang through the ranks of those

who are ever watching for the halting of God's people; arrangements were speedily made by a number of them for a public demonstration of their joy. I was notified by a neighbor that the *mob* had determined on a regular "turn out;" and that personal violence was strongly talked of, and threatened. Friends, advised me to leave the place for fear of injury; and as I have already hinted, and as you very well know, I pitched on your house as a refuge from the storm. There *was* a "turn out" on the evening after I left: and all was done, which could be done to deepen my disgrace, and deepen the wound which my great sin and fall had made in the hearts of my family and friends. One of my sisters who resided in the place, being out of health with a nervous complaint, was almost driven to distraction by their proceedings. After marching through the place and making sundry exhibitions to disgrace me, I was burnt in effigy in front of the meeting house where I had formerly preached. Now commenced the open triumph of the powers of hell over me. As I have already hinted the reason alledged for these proceedings was my sin; and yet it was ascertained that some of the leaders of this "sin avenging" company were most notorious for their licentious lives. If I had persisted in my sin—refused confession and scorned to ask forgiveness, I should have been upon a par with some of them and they would no doubt have treated me with due respect; but my determination, although I had sinned, to sin no more and in future to live a life of godliness was what they hated, and was the *real* ground, together with what good I *had* done of their fiendish proceedings. Their names and their work, are all known by HIM before whom they must all appear in that day when he shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. The proclamation now made by many was that I could not dwell in Pawtucket because of the mob. This talk was not from the mob themselves, but from those who *professed* to deprecate their proceedings; but, who in many instances, were the real or principal causes of all the mobbing I have suffered. It ought to be well understood by man,

as I believe it is by the Judge of all the earth, that the most guilty authors of mobs are not the miserable short sighted and profligate rabble, who *shew* themselves, as actors in the scene, but men, who stand behind the curtain, pretending to condemn mobs and yet by their doctrine create them. This has been most clearly illustrated in the mobbing of abolitionists in the course of the great Anti-Slavery conflict, which has been going on for some years past in this country. Selfish and interested men, high in office and repute, in church and state, would maintain that they had no right and ought not to agitate the subject of slavery; which in the minds of the mob was altogether sufficient reason to inflict upon them personal violence; and then, after the mob had practiced in accordance with the doctrine which these men preached behind the curtain, the abolitionists by the same men would be accused of causing mobs! In my case certain persons were determined from selfish motives, (as I think I shall clearly shew you in another communication) that I should no longer dwell in this place. Not that they were troubled that I had sinned against God; but that if I stayed here, fallen and dead as I was, I should be in the way of the accomplishment of their plans. Now, you know, that in less than two minutes after I first arrived at your house you expressed it as your decided opinion that I ought still to reside in Pawtucket, to *live down* as far as possible the reproach which my sin had brought upon the cause of religion:—that *where* a person had sinned, *there*, he ought, by his future conduct, to shew his penitence and reformation. This I believe to be the doctrine of impartial benevolence and disinterested love; but it was *not* the doctrine of the persons alluded to above: *their* doctrine was that I had no *right* to stay here. If they admitted that I had a *civil* right, they contended that I had no moral right—that is, that it was religiously or morally wrong. They constantly blew the trumpet that I OUGHT to leave the place: and what did the materials which generally compose a mob want, to countenance them in their diabolical proceedings

more than this? They said, that such and such *respectable persons* said, I ought not to say in the place—that it was *wrong* for me to do so; and *they* meant to *compel* me to do what these highly respectable persons said I *ought* to do:—and when the mob assembled, and in a worse than beastly manner assaulted me and other *innocent* persons, these same respectable persons would set up the greatest lamentation, almost, imaginable, that *I* should stay here and be the means of so much disturbance! Some of the persons who thus moved the wires, were those, too, who professed to be great Anti-Slavery folks; and who could easily understand how selfish *pro-slavery* persons, stood behind the curtain, and set the mobbish company to devour the abolitionists: and yet, they worked by the *same rule* in order to drive me from the place where I wished to dwell: and pleaded justification too, by the same mode of reasonings! But God sees the secret, serpentine, windings of selfishness, and there is no question in my own mind, but **HIS** decision, is, that at *their doors* lies the principal guilt of all the mobbing which I and my afflicted friends have suffered since my fall, of which I shall give you a brief account presently. I know how they pretend to *excuse* themselves—i. e. on the ground of my having sinned and fallen. Now, the truth is, that this very circumstance increases their guilt. If you find a man in the road, with his legs, and arms broken, and commence an attack upon him; mauling him with a cudgel; is not your conduct *more* despicable, *more* aggravating, than if he were sound in limb, and able to defend himself? Every one can see this—yet, this very circumstance in my case, has been considered by the class of persons alluded to, good reason why I should be bruised, to the hearts content of a brutal mob unless I would flee from the place: although I lay with my bones broken, bleeding in their street, gasping for the breath of life; unable to utter a word in self-defence: and in *one* sense, unable to move from my position. This my brother has been done by many whose names stand high among the professed disciples of Christ:—and by those too, who

are constantly deprecating the conduct of Southern slaveholders and their abettors towards the poor down-trodden slaves. Now, they ought to well understand, that the very thing, which they have urged as an *excuse* for their conduct towards me is *that* which makes the most aggravating wickedness:—and that the most direful curses spoken of in the book of God are pronounced against it. Take the following from the 65th Psalm. In the 5th verse David acknowledges his *sinfulness*. “O God (he says) thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from thee.” He then speaks of the reproach which had fallen upon him and proceeds to denounce the most awful judgments on those who notwithstanding his foolishness and sins, reproached and distressed him in his low estate—“Let their table become a snare before them; and *that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap.*” “Let their eyes be darkened that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake.” “Pour out thine indignation and wrath upon them, and let wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate; and let none dwell in their tents.” Why all this? Because—“they persecute him **WHOM THOU HAST SMITTEN**, and talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded.” Perhaps there is no conduct towards our fellow men, more aggravatingly wicked in the sight of God, than to put our foot upon the necks of God’s fallen people; at the same time smitten by their heavenly father for their sins. This, is a subject to which my attention was never called until my own dreadful fall; and which I have never, in a single instance, heard advanced by any preacher:—and yet, there is line upon line in proof of it in the Bible. I believe there is not a single instance recorded in all the bible of God’s people’s sinning and his casting them down, under his heavy chastisements, for their iniquities, but what he poured out *more* awful judgments on those, who, in their fallen and unhappy state trampled them under foot, despised and reproached them. But to return—this doctrine so zealously preached by the class of persons already described that I

ought not to live in the place, so strengthened the hands of the mob that to human conception, my residence in it was impossible. But where should I go and what should I do? These inquiries deeply interested me during the few weeks which I stayed at your house. I knew not what *to do*; for, that very doctrine and course of conduct, which would not let me live in Pawtucket, sent a message in all directions, to all places, and all people not to receive me, let me go where I would. Let me go where I would, the fact that I was driven from my home would follow me:—and what better argument would mobs want in any place to fall upon me like blood hounds, than the story that I was so wicked the people of Pawtucket would not let me live there? So you see, that the doctrine that I must leave the place, not only banished me from my home—the place where I desired to dwell, but would if legitimately carried out, banish me from the face of the earth!

With what anguish of soul I reflected on this when at your house, thinking what I should do. Turn which way I would, the message of my fall had preceded me; and seemed to raise mountains of difficulties in the way of my taking up my residence any where else. As I have already said, I was pennyless—with a destitute family: in the dead of winter; pierced through and through with a view of my sin; the world in arms against me and but here and there a solitary individual that seemed to have the least concern to alleviate my distress or bind up my bleeding wounds. O if it had not been for the mercy of that blessed Jesus, against whom I had sinned, how inevitably must I have sunk beneath the waves of black despair! That blessed Saviour *did* support me. Of this I often spake to you when at your house and have again spoken in a former letter; but, there were sorrows of heart which I experienced in view of my situation of which I did not undertake to speak: which I never shall describe, for they were unutterable. You recollect that I left your house when you were away from home and unexpectedly to you. The circumstances in which I was placed, al-

ready described, seemed to press so heavily upon me, that it greatly increased my anxiety to see my family; and I determined to attempt it with all its attendant difficulties. I started from your house just before sunset on foot, to travel home, some fifteen or sixteen miles; with the hope of reaching there by 10 o'clock in the evening at least.—I expected my family would be up, until that hour, and I hoped to find my way to them unobserved by others. It was in February. There was snow on the ground and the walking was rendered exceedingly bad by a thaw. On first starting I travelled as rapidly as I was able, but had gone but a few miles, before I found that my exertion, and the badness of the way, were likely to entirely overcome my physical powers. By the time I had travelled half way, I could hardly get one foot before the other—I was seized with the cramp in almost every limb from head to foot.—All the way in which I could make any progress, was by travelling a few rods and then stopping, standing and resting in the road; for the abundance of snow and water precluded all possibility of my sitting down to rest. I never suffered so much physically in all the journeys I ever travelled. It seemed sometimes as if I must perish in the street:—for where could I call and expect to be received? I was an outcast; especially with the professed religious part of the community; most of whom were ready to spurn me from their presence. Added to my great bodily distress was all the mental anguish arising from my peculiar situation; and these combined, rendered my sufferings such, as no heart *of flesh* can conceive of, without melting in pity; but “*hearts of stone*” can witness such distress in a fellow sinner and not only be unmoved with sympathy and compassion, but *coolly contrive* to make the cup more bitter, and add weight to the heavy burden of woe! This my dear brother I *know* by the most painful experience — Through the mercy of God I arrived at the dwelling of my family about midnight:—but now what should I do? They were all in bed and so sound asleep, that I could not awake them without alarming others, which I durst not do, for

ear that my arrival would be made public. I had no other alternative but to stay out doors all night and watch my opportunity at the rising of my family in the morning to get into the house undiscovered if I could. This was a dreary prospect. As I have before said, it was in February and the ground covered with snow. I was so physically disabled that I could hardly move an inch without the most exquisite pain; and yet, I was obliged to move, or suffer all more, if not quite perish with the cold. With great fort I travelled to the meeting house where I had formerly reached and sat me down on the door steps. O my brother what were my reflections! To be sure I was in the village where I had *sinned*; and I was in the village too where I had confessed my sin, humbled myself sincerely before God and man—thrown myself at the feet of ministers and people and implored forgiveness of professor and profane. Yes I was in the village where I had *sinned*, but I was in the village too where for more than sixteen years I had tried to serve God—where I had implored the mercy of God on many a distressed sinner, and had been made an instrument of pointing many weeping heavy laden souls to the arms of God, where they found comfort and peace. But now behold my situation! I thought of *by gone days*—and of my *present state* and my heart was broken—my soul was overwhelmed within me. I was ready to perish in the street of the village of all my labors, for want of a shelter and for want of friends! Indeed I knew there were a *few* that were my friends—that would put in jeopardy their earthly all—yea, even their lives to have rendered me assistance:—but they were so situated that I could then obtain from them no assistance. But where was I? in the midst of a Pagan village? No! but I was in a small village where there were perhaps five hundred of the *professed* followers of a merciful and forgiving Jesus; and who were strictly commanded to “forgive” and “comfort” a repenting fallen brother “lest he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” In a village where there were seven meeting houses dedicated to the worship of a merciful and

sin-forgiving God and as many professed ministers, of a gospel of mercy and peace, to the GREATEST of sinners; to the greatest of backsliders who return to God and seek his favor. Yes this was the village in which an imploring sinner suffered almost every thing but death on the doleful night of which I have been speaking; because, comparatively speaking, there were no "bowels of mercy" for him; "no man cared for his soul." You will not understand me to intimate that I feared personal violence from these five hundred professors themselves? No—they have always been ready to say individually, "I would not hurt the hairs of his head." But what, I ask, was it but the doctrine that I had no moral or religious right to stay in the place that reduced me to the extremity of which I am describing? Nothing else. Does any rational being doubt, that if these five hundred professors or indeed one fifth part of them with their ministers at their head had risen up and maintained the doctrine of the bible, in respect to forgiving and shewing me mercy; and of the great sin and shame of disturbing me, or offering me personal violence in dwelling here if I pleased, and thought it my duty—I say does any one doubt if *this* course had been taken but what I could have dwelt here in perfect peace and safety? No—there is no doubt of this. Where then is the condemnation? Let God decide, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James, 4 C. 17 v. This is God's doctrine. But to pursue my narrative. I lived until morning—entered the house to the utter astonishment of my afflicted wife and family, and was permitted to stay with them a few days, it not being generally known that I was in the place. You saw me the next day, and although the circumstances in which I was placed, the sufferings which I had endured and the apparent sorrow of my soul greatly affected you; still, you were then unable, as you will *still* be unable to fathom the depths of my wo on that memorable night. But it was only a specimen of much, very much which I have since endured, and although I cannot as I before said, be very minute

in detailing it, yet shall in my next, briefly continue the recital.

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER VII.

PAWTUCKET, SEPT. 30TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

In the account which I gave you of my sufferings, I wish clearly to be understood that I do not feel as if my Heavenly Father had dealt severely with me for my sins. No—far, very far from that. I feel as if his mercy towards me in all which he has called me to pass through, has been “higher than the clouds:” and that so far from suffering *more* than I have deserved at his hands, I feel fully convinced that for my sins I deserve an eternal hell! and that all my hope of escaping such an awful doom is in the *forgiving mercy* of God through the great and infinite atonement made on Mount Calvary by his dear Son. O, how much did a certain person miss it, not a long time since, who in attempting to revile me, said I deserved to be hung. A very *limited* view was this of my sin’s desert!! O merciful Jesus, how surely must I have suffered forever and ever if it had not been for thy redeeming blood?—Nor will you dear brother, I trust, charge me with forgetting that *I* am the chief of sinners, because I necessarily speak of the sins of others in their conduct towards me.—No—God forbid. As I was saying in my last, I was permitted to stay at home a day or two with my poor distressed family. But *while* I stayed, we were in constant fear, lest the knowledge of my being there, should spread, and be mobites be upon me. Accordingly, I hastened to another retreat for safety. This place was the house of brother Ezekiel Cornell, in Attleborough, about eleven miles from Pawtucket. Time nor eternity, I trust, will ever erase from my mind, the kind manner in which I

was received and treated by him and his dear family; together with two other families in the same house, by the name of Morse. Here, I stayed for a number of weeks; during which time I was anxiously striving to hit on some plan to be *somewhere* with my family, out of Pawtucket, where I could labor for their support; but all seemed in vain. During my stay there I thought I enjoyed great freedom in prayer and much comfort in reading the bible. While I was there shut up, a letter from that Christ-like man, Gerrit Smith of Peterborough N. Y. reached me—which in its proper place I shall lay before you, as I am sure you will agree with me in the conclusion that hardly any thing could come from an uninspired pen more like the consolatory language of Jesus himself to a poor heavy laden sinner overwhelmed with trouble, as was the case with myself, than this letter:—and as if to shew the contrast, it was about this time, that a professed minister of the gospel—a minister, to whom for ten years previous I had shewed unmixed kindness, preferred a complaint against me to the civil authorities of the state; in order to have me fined and thrown into a loathsome prison! Yes, dear brother, this is true—you know it—and you know in part, too, with what kindness I treated that man long before my fall. I will not undertake to pronounce on the merit or demerit of this transaction—let it speak for itself; and let him answer for it to his conscience and his God. Was it like the conduct of Jesus when the woman was brought to him taken in adultery? If it was the duty of *any one* to pursue this course towards me, yet was it *his* duty as a minister of Jesus? I do not believe that there was ever a person indicted in the state of R. Island for the same offence since the *settlement* of the state * yet this man felt it *his* duty (?) to lay his grasp upon me in the midst and height of all my wretchedness, in order to add to my distress and disgrace. Nor was this all—in carrying forward

*I have learned lately that a *colored* man was indicted a number of years ago.

this benevolent plan, he almost drove my poor wife to distraction. In order to make an indictment stand against me, it was necessary to prove that I was a married man. My marriage was not recorded in the town of Cranston where it was solemnized—for at that time it was not customary; and he could not find any one who was present on the occasion. Now the story of my wife is, that he came to the house and in order to find out who were present on the occasion, he accused her of living in adultery with me for more than twenty years. My wife said she told him it was not true. He said it was; she could not bring a single witness that we were ever married. He said the mob had a right to take me and kill me, and his object was to save me from the violence of mobs. In all soberness I ask you if this man can now have a word to say against the *pious fraud* practiced by the Catholics? Now did he believe that we were never married? Did any one believe it? I leave you to judge. But this she testifies was his conduct: and after, by it, as I have before hinted, almost frightening her to distraction, and thereby, drawing out of her, the names of some who were present at our marriage, he prayed over his conduct!—Having thus, by downright **DECEPTION** gained his point, he rested not, until the Grand Jury found a bill against me; although I am quite confident that the Attorney General was loath to interfere in the case at all; but was literally driven to it by this old and long cherished *friend* of mine: this minister of Jesus: and I have moreover been informed, that he pressed it upon the civil authorities, not to be *too easy* with me; asserting at the same time that it would not hurt me to lay in jail *six months*. And what do you think is the reason he has assigned to some of my friends for this course of proceeding towards me? Why that he did it for my good!!

Who was this woman that he accused of living in adultery for more than twenty years? A woman, that never before was charged with immorality, to my knowledge from the days of her childhood. A woman who had many a time brought water to wash *his* feet: and had always welcomed

him to her humble abode and administered to him the best temporal blessings which our house afforded: this, was the woman, broken hearted, with the dreadful afflictions which had fallen upon her, that he visited in my absence, in her lonely estate; *not* to comfort her, but to accuse her of living in adultery for more than twenty years! Yet this man, after such a course of proceedings as this, walks with his head up.

But to proceed—I determined after I found that the Grand Jury had found a bill against me, in due time after the rising of the court which was then in session, to give myself up to the civil authorities of R. I. I well knew that if I did not do it, those who wished to swallow me up, would send after me, in addition to all the rest of their accusations, *that* of my being a fugitive from justice: besides, if the laws of my native state had any demands upon me in *justice* and *righteousness*, I desired to pay them. But now mark my situation: the law of R. I. bid me come home and *pay its demand*; but professors of religion and the *mob*, said I ought not, and should not:—and if I attempted it, personal violence would and should be inflicted upon me in the most severe manner. This has been my situation for months: for after I gave myself up and was under five hundred dollar bonds *not* to depart, the same arguments and the same course of conduct was pursued to drive me away. Now, was not this, precisely, like chaining a man to a tree and then killing him because he did not run away? Yet, *I* was very *stubborn*, after being thus chained because I did not flee! I know it might be said that there were other places in the state where I might have resided with my family and supported them. I ask where? One of my friends, about four miles from this place was threatened with being mobbed because I spent *one day* with him.—But to go on with my story. After spending a number of weeks at brother Cornel's, I removed to another place in Rehoboth which I do not feel at liberty to name, for fear that even at this late hour, the fact might draw down upon them vengeance and injuries. I thought it best to remove

from brother Cornel's for my residence was generally known—and, although I did not know it then, yet I afterwards learned that during my short residence there, three attempts were made to raise a mob to drive me from the place: but a merciful God confounded them. About the middle of April, I took up my residence privately with brother Nehemiah Randall. The treatment which I received from him and his wife has laid me under grateful obligations to them, which I never shall be able to repay. May God reward them for their kindness at the resurrection of the just! While I was here, I caused to be printed a short address to the people of Pawtucket. If I was never allowed to dwell in the place again, I felt as if I wanted to say something more to them. In this address I reiterated my confession; and at the same time it seemed as if I could not help speaking briefly, of the unscriptural course of some of God's professed people towards me; in refusing to shew me mercy. This was enough. They seized upon these expressions as evidence that I was not penitent and a sufficient justification for their rejecting me. But where was their apology for rejecting me three months *previous* to that? during which time my confession was before them in the most humiliating terms: containing not a word of the description which they were so offended at in this address. But more on this subject at another time. The time came, when I thought proper to deliver myself up to the officer who held the warrant against me, on the indictment already alluded to. I determined to come home long enough to have that accomplished and risk consequences. After my arrival I sent word to him, in Providence, that I was at home ready to be taken into his custody; but as I purposed to give bonds for my appearance, and as it was necessary for me to recognize in Providence, he wished me to come there in order to have it accomplished. A misunderstanding respecting this, occasioned a delay; and consequently the warrant was not served upon me for a number of months afterwards. After staying at home two nights, I again left the place for safety. I went but a short

distance, however, and made myself known. I was now sent for; or rather word was sent to me, to return and dwell in Pawtucket if I pleased:—that I should not be harmed &c. And who, my dear brother, do you think it was, that sent me this message in my wretched condition? Influential professors of religion? No, no; but persons who made no pretensions to religion. Men who by those very professors, are looked upon as the Pharisees in the days of Christ and by the apostles, looked upon as Gentile sinners: that is, as *dogs*. But they sent this message to me—welcomed me to their houses and assured me, that they would defend me from harm. O my heart aches when I give you this account; but it is *true*, and I think ought to be told. Let not unbelievers say in view of it, that there is no such thing as the religion of Jesus: nor, that the precious bible is not the word of God:—but rather let the land mourn, that the glory of gospel truth and mercy, has so departed from God's professing Israel—and let them sigh and cry for the coming of Jesus from *Nazareth* again.

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER VIII.

PAWTUCKET, OCT. 1ST, 1837.

My dear Brother:—

I think I closed my last, in shewing that in my distress, God inclined the hearts of a number of persons who made no pretensions to religion, to pity me and help me. I cannot forbear in this place, to mention the use which was made of this by certain professors of religion, who themselves were bent on my leaving the place. Why, they had conclusive evidence *now*, that I was not right; because the wicked, they said, were friendly to me!—One person in particular, who has spared no pains to defame me, seemed to have his pious feelings very much wrought upon now. He and others were shewing their

deep and ardent piety in trampling under foot a fallen man—"in persecuting him whom God had smitten"—in not remembering to shew mercy to an imploring sinner:—but, when God touched the hearts of persons who made no profession of religion, to reach forth the hand of compassion to me while driven to such an extremity of wretchedness, why, it was strong proof of my wickedness, that unbelievers befriended me! Everlasting praise to God that he did thus incline their hearts. When I think of it my soul is melted with gratitude. And shall I conceal the conduct of these persons who manifested so much pity and sympathy for me? God forbid—I sincerely thank *them*.—Did I renounce any of my religious views to gain favor from them? No! Nor do I in making this statement—but I should be worse than a heathen to refuse a grateful acknowledgement of it. But as I was saying, this was evidence against my piety in the minds of certain persons; and so *of course* Mordicai, Esthier and all of the Jews who were saved through the instrumental favor of king Ahasuerus—and Joseph too are condemned by inferences from their doctrine! Before I proceed, I ought in justice to mention that while at the last mentioned place of retreat, *one* professor of religion, who was not a member of the church of which I had formerly been pastor, visited me and spake to me the words of mercy and compassion. I feel under lasting obligations to him; not only for his christian-like treatment of me at this time, but for his subsequent kindness to me. He was a "friend indeed." But I finally determined to return home and live openly with my family. This, I had no sooner done, than certain persons began to talk, that I never could stay in Pawtucket on account of the mob. One man, in particular, a member of a church, abounded in this kind of talk. *He* would not harm a hair of my head, he said; but he *knew* enough that would; and all they were waiting for, was to have me move out of the house where I then lived: and this it was expected I should soon be obliged to do. I desire not to judge wrongfully, but I am far from being alone in the opinion that this man

and others, who were talking the same language were more distressed for fear that I should *not* be mobbed out of the place, than they were in apprehension of any injury which I might sustain; for, at the moment they were expressing their fears that I should be mobbed, they were taking the straight forward course to raise one, by most violently condemning me for thinking to live in the place. But the wires were moving. The tenement in which I lived, and had occupied for a number of years, was owned by a widowed lady, then residing in Providence, and constituted her thirds of what was formerly her husband's estate. The other part had been purchased and was then occupied by a certain professor of religion, a member in good, and perhaps I shall not err in saying high standing in one of the churches in this village. Now although I had lived with this man a number of years, and had never done ought that I knew of in word or deed to injure him, yet instead of just stepping into my room and speaking to me as the word of God commanded him if he had ought against me, I received from him one morning the following letter:

NORTH PROVIDENCE, MAY 15 1837.

Rev. Ray Potter—

Sir—I am compelled on account of things which have transpired of late to give you an invitation to move out of this house. If you do not feel disposed to accept this invitation I shall immediately take such measures by law, that will accomplish it forth with.——

As I do not wish to injure the man, although he has injured me I spare his name. This was the first information that I was possessed of, that there was any transfer of the tenement to his hands—and what is more, he had *not* at the time he wrote me this letter legal possession of the tenement—I mean he had no deed of it. And yet, you see what he says about turning me out of the house by legal steps. If he *had* been in legal possession of the house he could not legally have turned me out under three months. But I determined to go as soon as possible; still, where

should I go was a most perplexing question. I have good reason to believe, that his determination was, in unison with others, to take this opportunity to try to drive me out of the place. But where should I go *out of the place*? I knew of no where under heaven. I tarried a few days during which time he had two spells of imperiously urging me to move forthwith. My situation at this time was trying beyond description: and I leave you to judge whose conduct towards me at this time savored the most of *humanity*; this high professor, and his coadjutors in oppressing me, or, that of those persons that make no pretensions to religion, to whom I have already alluded. Facts are stubborn things—I *state* facts; and I am willing that they should decide this question. All this does not prove that *none* who profess religion possess it, although it may *possibly* prove that *some* who profess it—and are making long prayers—and thanking God that they are no *adulterers*—are not like “this publican,” do not *act out* so much *humanity* as those whom they look upon as the ancient Pharisees looked upon Gentile sinners—viz: dogs without the pale of God’s mercy! But to return—at this trying juncture when ‘refuge seemed to fail me,’ two brethren* came to my relief. Not that this was their *first* act of mercy towards me; but this was the commencement of a course, which exposed them to still greater sufferings, for shewing me favor, than they had hitherto experienced; although they had already suffered much in thus trying to obey the commands of God in the discharge of their duty. They had hired a tenement for their own accommodation; but rather than see me turned out of doors, they determined to take me in; a’tthough greatly to their own inconvenience. But now other trouble rolled in upon me. This house was near by and in plain sight, of the dwelling of the family of the person who had been injured by my transgression, and I knew that my residing so near them would be extremely disagreeable to them: but I had no where else to go. I

*Scott Smith and Rufus Bliss

was literally *driven* to take up my abode there; and yet this circumstance has been zealously improved, to excite prejudice against me, by representations that I moved there on purpose to afflict them. Nothing is farther from truth. But I removed: and now commenced a scene of mobbing and other vile treatment of me and my family, that beggars description. A certain individual, whom you well know, and whose character I shall not here undertake to describe, commenced a course of coming around the house, evenings and frequently on Sabbath afternoons with as many as he could collect to join him in such a crusade, and in hearing of all who were in the house, belched out the *dispositions of their hearts*, in language which one would think the inmates of any brothel in the land would be ashamed to utter. I think you cannot conceive of talk so vulgar and obscene. Now these were the persons that were so *grieved* on account of my sin! This person worked a number of weeks not many rods across the fields from where I lived, and his constant practice, was, to salute me with some of his vulgar expressions, every time he saw me without doors. I thought of Shimei cursing David, and was still. His voice generally might be heard half a mile, and his language the most revolting imaginable, to every sense of decency, much more of piety and religion. You will ask, perhaps, if he was *countenanced* in this, by any who made pretensions to respectability. I answer yes—both male and *female*. But this was all well for they were avenging the sin of licentiousness! I ought in justice to mention, here, that I have been credibly informed that his wife and family were opposed to his conduct, and much grieved on account of it. Sometimes a great number would collect around the house with him; join him in the most vulgar, offensive and abusive talk and do all which they could, to grieve, distress, and alarm us: for I was constantly threatened with personal violence. My innocent family—my poor distressed wife and two other innocent and virtuous families in the same house had to suffer all of this. Now observe: one of the main pillars of the argument, that I ought not to stay in

the village of Pawtucket, has been, that it was distressing to the family of the injured person, &c. I have always desired to do all which I could, to soothe their feelings, and in all which has ever been said and done, by *some* of them to me, in a way of revenge, I have abstained from retaliation. I would do every thing possible for me to do, to make restitution to them, for all the injuries they may have sustained from me. If I had *money*, I would freely give it to them—but I cannot do that which is not in my power. And now I would ask if I have not a family?—And what has been the course of conduct pursued towards them? I have just alluded to a part of it—but one half has not been told, nor ever can be. For three months, they were constantly harrassed with a course of treatment, which no dumb beasts ever ought to be made the subjects of. This, many know full well. By it, my wife's health was so affected, that she seemed for some time, tottering on the brink of the grave. And this, says one, was an additional reason, why you ought to have moved. And where should I have gone, to have got clear of mobs? I could not have crossed the ocean, to have put myself under the government of the Autocrat of Russia, or the Emperor of the Turks, if I had been disposed, and as for *Republican America*, I should like to know *where* the spot is, that is not under the imperial government of mobs. But I have already given good and substantial reasons, why I did not move. Besides, my wife, like a moral heroine, conscious of her own innocence, resolutely declared, that she would not leave the place at the bidding of a mob. I would ask what my virtuous wife, and innocent children had done, to bring down upon them, such a torrent of almost unparalleled abuse? Was it not enough for them, to be pressed with the mountain weight of grief and anguish, occasioned by *my* transgression and fall, without being driven to distraction, and almost to the extinction of life, by a worse than barbarian mob? And who were the moving cause of this—or in other words, who supported the mobbing? Before God I declare, that influential persons, many of whom were pro-

sessors, supported it, by preaching the doctrine, that I had no moral or religious right, to stay in the place. The mob quoted from them, this doctrine constantly—and they only acted out this sentiment. *There*, lies the principal part of the responsibility, as I have shewn you in a former letter: and putting myself out of the question, the day is coming, when they must meet that afflicted and abused woman and children, before him whose justice is inflexible! But to proceed: our sufferings were very great. Often times I fled to the woods, and spent part of the night there, to escape the violence which I feared from the mob. There I often prostrated myself before HLM, whose power is omnipotent, and whose hand is mighty to save, and implored him to deliver us from the hand of the violent and wicked. I thought of those, who, in ancient times wandered in goat skins, and sheep skins, and had to become tenants of the dens and caves of the earth; and sometimes seriously thought, that I must be driven to the same extremity—I felt as if I had no where to lay my head. Nor was this all. Two other innocent and virtuous families, who resided in the same house, were partakers with us, in all our distresses. A natural sister of mine, who was in an infirm state of health, was so alarmed that she quit her home—the fiendish proceedings of the mob, being insupportable.

You cannot conceive of the lies which were framed, respecting myself and friends, entirely out of “whole cloth,” in order to keep up this excitement against us. Not a *settled* minister in all this region, came near us in all this time of overwhelming distress—nor scarcely a professor of religion, excepting the few, to which I have already alluded. You can scarcely imagine in what a manner most of them passed the house—those too, who before my fall, professed to be my friends. They seemed to *brace* up themselves, and press forward, as if they thought the sight of me, would greatly disgrace them. Did Jesus ever turn away from an imploring sinner? Was this conduct like *him*? I believe, if a person is under the influence of the spirit of Jesus, it will be very difficult for them to stop their ears to

the cry of the penitent, nor will they feel it a disgrace to visit them. The few who did visit us, were loaded with imprecations, and accused of the worst of motives—especially the females. It was constantly asserted, that I continued to visit the person, who fell with me in sin, and another person who resided with her, for her deeds of mercy was the most abused, with slander and false accusations, of any person I have ever known. I know of none on earth, in my estimation, more like Jesus than she, and yet almost every kind of slander, which Satan ever invented, seemed now to be poured out upon her without mixture, because she would not forsake us, but visited us in our distress. Thanks be to God, that there is a day fast rolling on, when her true character will appear: and let those who have defamed her, for her conduct towards me and my family, in this hour of peril and distress, prepare to answer the demand of that commandment, “thou shalt not bear false witness!” My invaluable friend and brother, Smith, was openly threatened with being carried to the bridewell for praying and his excellent and godly wife, treated but little better. But my brother, I cannot give you a just account of the enormity of these proceedings. I never witnessed their parallel—and if Satan has any honor to bestow on those of his children, who most nearly resemble their father, no doubt but the leader of that mob and his coadjutors, will have strong claims for it. And what was the consolation that we got from the christian public, generally, during all these days of peril? Why, that I was a *stubborn man, to stay, and cause so much trouble!* Well, there is a God of *justice*. O my brother—was not here a revelation of hearts? But we had succor from some sources, that I least expected it from—indeed, it was wonderful in what a mysterious way God worked. It shewed me plainly his hand; O may I never forget his goodness, nor those who held out to me a helping hand, in these hours of great trial and calamity.

At length, at the darkest time, and when we least expected it, deliverance came. On Saturday evening, of the 26th

Aug. there were signs of more than an ordinary effort by the mob to distress us. We were informed, that their calculation was, to attack us at a late hour of the night. In the mean time, a company of *large boys*, (I know not how to speak more appropriately,) commenced a march through the place with martial music. This was kept up for an hour or two, and had a natural tendency to collect hundreds into their ranks. Whether this company first started with a *design* to join the mob or not, I am not certain; but during their excursion, the mob collected around the house, and it is said that some of their number, interceded with this company, to march up to the house, at the time they meant to make an assault. Hundreds were collected at a short distance from the house; and although we did not know it then, yet I have now good reason to believe, that many of them were ready to defend us, if the mob undertook to enter the house. This company, just now alluded to, about 10 o' clock reached the house; and at that moment the mob made a rush towards the door. They marched up in *double file*; headed by two men of monstrous stature, and it was said, that their approach was, as if they meant to destroy the house and its inmates; but they had no sooner *reached* the house, than one of these gigantic leaders, was struck by an unknown hand, a most terrible blow; and some say levelled with the ground, although others say not—at any rate, the blow was a most severe one, and instantly there was fighting throughout the ranks. I was not in the house; yet so near, that I judged from the noise, curses, and imprecations, that there was fighting, which gave me great concern. My friends in the house, were utterly astounded; for, they knew not what to make of it, as they supposed those who had collected around the house, were all of one mind, and they knew not how to account for the fighting. They were all peace men, having been determined, from the commencement of our difficulties, as I was myself, never to resort to physical force in self-defence; nor did one of them lift a finger. However, on learning the facts, they were as follows:—Many who be-

lived in fighting, had become exceedingly disgusted, and finally exasperated, at the treatment which I and my family had received. They said, that I had confessed my sin, implored forgiveness, and given myself up into the hands of the civil authorities, and what more could in reason be required of me; and indeed, what more could I do? After all this, for me and my family to be thus tormented by an unprincipled mob, they considered unsufferable; and as the civil authorities had failed to quell the mob, and the influential part of the community, refused to frown down such proceedings, and as "club law" as they termed it, was the order of the day, they determined to have a hand in it; and defend me at the risk of their lives. Now, all this was decided upon, as I have before said, without our knowing a lip of it. I mention this, because we were immediately accused, of getting men there on that evening to fight; and two young men, I understood, positively declared, that they saw a man come out of the house, and knock the afore-named man down—as unfounded lies as ever were told: but you see by these assertions, how utterly impossible it was, for us to have the truth understood respecting us. But, as I before said, those were the determinations of a number to defend us; and it appears that they actually watched the house, for a number of nights before this took place; and we have since been informed, that a large number of men, were at times collected in a grove, near at hand, ready at a moment's warning, to come to our rescue. How little do God's people know *how* he designs to take care of them and deliver them. Heaven, earth, and hell, are all under his control, and he can make use of Angels and devils, saints and sinners, to accomplish his purposes. We felt that our refuge and help was in God alone, and we cried to him day and night for deliverance, but little did we know what was then going on. On the evening of the fight, most of the persons alluded to, it appears, had retired; it being late; but those who lingered, commenced their work, it seems, the moment they thought the house was to be assaulted. We never knew to this

day, who it was that struck the man already alluded to—It was immediately reported, that it was one of my nephews—evidently designed, to create a farther rage against me; as if I were the means of getting my relatives there, to fight for me. This was false. I believe two of my nephews were there; though I knew nothing of it, until afterwards—but neither of them struck this man. However, the work was done, and there was much hard fighting.—The fight seemed to produce a scattering in all directions. There was a little show of a mob, one evening afterwards, but not to annoy us much. The truth was, this ended it—for the very man, of which I spoke, who commenced this diabolical work, was now threatened with the same personal violence, that he had been trying to inflict upon me, if he could be caught. Thus you see how God works. I now wish to state to you a dream, which I am not ashamed to say, I believe was from God; and had a most complete fulfilment in these proceedings. A certain pious woman, by the name of *Brailey*, told me, when this mobbing first commenced,

She dreamed, that I was sitting in a room, and a very evil looking man came in, approached me, and laid down close by me, a paper, containing quite a large quantity of *gun powder*. He then took an *iron* which he held in his hand, heat it *red hot*, and tried to touch it off and destroy me. She said, she was exceedingly alarmed, when she saw that I did not move, for she expected I should be blown to atoms. I remained, however, in the same position; not moving at all: and although he heat his iron red hot, six or seven times, the powder would not ignite, and I remained unhurt. Just at that time, an *Elephant* approached to the door of the room where I was sitting, of an enormous size, and a most frightful aspect; the man took the powder from me, and laid it down close beside the *Elephant*—heat his iron, touched the powder, and it went off the *first time* and blew this monster to atoms!

She dreamed this *three times over in one night, every*

time precisely alike. I will give you my interpretation: The evil looking man, heating the iron to touch off the powder, was a certain person or rather persons, trying to inflame the mob to drive me out of the place; for you will recollect that the whole drift of this mobbing was to get me to *move*. The powder not going off, when touched so many times with a red hot iron, shewed how wonderfully, and I might say miraculously, God preserved me unhurt, while this storm was bursting upon me in such torrents. The Elephant approaching the door was the mob coming up to the door on the evening I have described—and his being blown to pieces, was its dispersion in all directions, by the fighting already mentioned; for you observed that they were assailed in the very same manner that I was threatened to be treated if I did not move! Never did I see any thing more literally fulfilled. I could but be struck when one of the brethren was giving me the account of their approach to the house led on by two gigantic men. He said they come as if they would tear every thing to pieces, and looked like Elephants—that is, he meant metaphorically. Now I confess that when I first heard this dream, it made a deep impression on my mind, and was a great means of supporting me through all this scene, until deliverance came. God be praised: “It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in Princes.”

In my next I shall commence an account of the transactions of the Church in relation to my unhappy case. In the mean time I remain

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER IX.

PAWTUCKET, OCT. 1ST, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

I can but remind you again, that in speaking of the faults of others, in the transactions connected with

my dreadful fall, I do not lose sight of my *own sinfulness*. No; a view of my own transgressions, press upon my soul with mountain weight; and have a tendency to fill me with pity and compassion for *other* transgressors. But, as I do not countenance nor excuse my own sins, so a regard for *truth* and the claims of God's holy law, require me to act in respect to the conduct of others. I do not expose the conduct of others from a spirit of *envy*:—because I am *fallen* and wish to bring others down:—no, far, very far, is this, from the disposition that I trust, governs me; for, the truth is, (as strange as it may appear to you) I would not exchange situations with the most honorable of those whom I censure, nor, would I exchange my *present* state, *all things considered*, with that which I was in, before my fall. But, I expose the conduct of others for the advancement of the cause of Christ, and to bring out great and glorious *truths*, which seem to have been buried out of sight by the great body of Christian professors of the present age.—These, are the motives and this is the object which I now have in view in giving you a brief account of the proceedings of the church, of which before my fall, I was pastor, in relation to my case. I shall have to speak of the conduct of some, with the most painful emotions:—not only because they have, as I conceive, sinned in a most aggravating manner, but because of the very peculiar attachment, which for many years I had borne to them. I love them still, and constantly pray for them; and if it were possibly consistent with what I conceive to be my duty, in respect to the cause of truth, I would bury their conduct if I could, in oblivion. But, it appears to me that truth and righteousness forbid this; and I shall obey, however trying to my feelings, in other respects; and, however the statement which I am about to make, might in the minds of many, especially of those who may be censured, subject me to the charge of being influenced by most wicked motives and base designs. After hearing the relation, I trust that *you* will say, it ought not to have been withheld. As I am not influenced by a desire of injuring, personally, the actors in this scene and as I

would do all which I can consistently to avoid this, I will substitute for their *real* names fictitious ones:—i. e. when I feel obliged to point out individuals:—(and I shall thus be obliged in a few instances) so that whatever use you may see fit to make of this account, only those who have been familiar with the circumstances, will know who are meant. I shall state facts; stubborn facts; which, if denied by the actors, shall be *proved* to the satisfaction of any candid mind. Now, one of the most prominent actors in this scene, *against truth*, as I conceive, I shall call *Archippus*. I first thought of calling him "*Expediency*;" on account of the appropriateness of the epithet, in respect to his doctrine and practice, in connection with the transactions which I am about to give you the history of. After the perusal, I am persuaded that you will readily admit that the doctrine of expediency—that *expediency* which refuses to submit to the word and commands of God for fear of *loss*, has rarely been more glaringly illustrated than in this man's doctrine and practice. But as the epithet would look like *nick-naming* I forbear. Archippus was a brother that for many years I had loved above most men in the world; and on whom I had made great (too great undoubtedly) dependance in sustaining the spiritual welfare of the church. To be sure, we differed in our theological views; but, then, I thought him to be so *uncommonly pious*, that I bore what I conceived to be his doctrinal errors with patience. A few months before my fall, however, reports were briefly circulated, prejudicial to his moral character. I mention this, because I cannot consistently *separate* it, from the history which I am about to give you as you will see presently.—He was charged with insulting a number of females in a manner tending to licentiousness. He came before the church and made a confession. In his confession he said he had given an *occasion* for the talk about him. Now I, and I believe most others who heard him, thought, he *meant* something by this confession:—that is we thought he meant to confess that he had actually been guilty of immoral and wicked conduct. We did not think he meant to confess that

he had been guilty of adultery—nor, that he had been guilty of *all* which had been laid to his charge: but we did think, he meant to confess, that he had been guilty of unchaste or immoral conduct towards females; which was shameful and disgraceful. Now, I wish you to *particularly remember this statement*; in order that you may the more clearly see, the *twist* which this brother subsequently gave to this confession, in order to answer his purposes of expediency.—Well, the church that were present, most freely forgave him. But there were some who were not present, that did not feel reconciled to him; and among these few there was one sister, who had gained a great reputation in the church for piety, that seemed by far the *most* foreign from giving him fellowship. She was abundant in her labors with other members of the church to exhibit in the clearest light the baseness of his conduct, and the enormity of his transgressions—declared she could not take bread from his hands at the communion season &c. &c. Now *this*, I wish you also to recollect; and as this sister has borne a conspicuous part in trying to crush me, while calling on her for mercy, and as she in order to accomplish it, finally swallowed the whole of what *she had said*, was such abominable conduct in her brother Archippus, I shall have occasion to speak of her often, and will therefore designate her by the title of Mrs. W. Now with this hard and unforgiving course of Mrs. W. towards him, Archippus was excessively grieved. He was frequently urging and insisting upon the duty of *forgiveness*, according to the plain commands of Christ; and scarcely a meeting for conference passed, for a considerable time, but what he spoke on the subject; and I must own, too, with much propriety. He talked much to *me*, respecting her hard and unforgiving course towards him, and was even opposed to her being appointed on committees to visit erring sisters, on account of her being in such a state. But Mrs. W. was deaf to all of his preaching.—She had not *then* found it *expedient* to fellowship him: and he told me that he was never talked so hard to, by any person, saint nor sinner as by her. You will learn presently

And it was that Archippus and Mrs. W. come to *unite* heart and hand without any retraction by either! In the mean time Archippus preached up strongly and constantly the duty of forgiveness, until my dreadful fall. On the evening when I come before the church, already alluded to, he preached it—and he preached it too, most powerfully to Mrs. W. She was one of the two, which I mentioned in a former letter that would not say that she would forgive me. I implored it of her on my knees; but she would not grant it, and I never have seen her since. Let her read the parable in the 18th of Matt. and prepare to meet her God! Archippus told her plainly, that he should not dare to go to *sleep* in such a state of mind; and to overthrow all her cavils respecting my *penitence*, he quoted the expression of our Savior, “if he say he repent thou shalt forgive him.” Before I get through, I shall show you the sophistry of that ground, which many have taken in respect to this subject, by pretending to make a distinction between forgiveness and fellowship here. To proceed. This was on Saturday evening. On Monday this brother visited me. His conversation was that which becometh the gospel of Christ—full of mercy and compassion. He then told me, how fully he felt satisfied that I was truly penitent for my sin—had no doubt but what I was a christian—believed me to be in a better state of mind than I had been in for a long time before, &c—and, said he, “brother P. and myself were saying that we had rather have heard you preached on our own account, the next day after you made your confession than ever before.” Bear this in your mind dear brother—it will help you more clearly to see the hideousness of that doctrine, which this brother soon began to obey: generally called by those who mean to obey God at the risk of the loss of all things, selfish expediency. Well; I think it was the next day that this same brother come to me with the request that I would ask to be excluded from the church. He thought it *expedient* that this should be done, in order to avoid this and that *calamity* and to answer this and that good purpose. You may judge with what

surprise I heard this from *his* lips; taking into consideration his *own* situation; and his former abundant preaching up forgiveness. I told him readily, that I *dare* not do it. It was directly contrary to scripture, and that I was afraid of *sinning* in such a course. These, were trying moments. I was overwhelmed in view of what I had done. I wished to do every thing which God in his word required me to do, to bind up the wounds which my sin and fall had occasioned: still, was I required to go contrary to scripture? No! this could not be. I had no other directory in the path of duty and notwithstanding all of his arguments (not one of which however, had any bible authority,) I resisted, the temptation and clung fast to God's precious word, as the man of my counsel. He left me; but he did not throw away his doctrine. He had commenced the journey in the road of selfish expediency, and as is sure to be the case his moral perception of right and wrong in the case, was immediately blunted; which has evidently increased ever since, in proportion to the progress which he has made in the way:—and he has made most rapid strides as you will see in the sequel. The *next* scene in this drama, was acted at your house. You remember it well. Archippus followed me there. His first conversation was, that he had come to see me again on the subject which we last conversed upon at our house. You heard it. You heard my objections similar to those which I have already recited:—and *you* saw plainly too, that we could none of us find a single word of scripture to authorise such a course. But it was a time I may say of most awful anxiety with me.—The arguments which Archippus urged that it would be for the good of the church—that it was the only thing which would prevent a *division*, almost overwhelmed me. He told me, that a certain Deacon in the Baptist Church; for whose judgment I entertained an exalted opinion, said it was the only course that would save *me* and save the *church*. O my brother save *me* and save the church at the expense of casting away and treading under foot, as plain commands of God, as were ever inscribed by the pen of

inspiration within the covers of the bible. I say *now*, rather than do this, let *me* sink to rise no more! I was also told that one of the most prominent men in your church had also expressed his decided opinion, and had written a letter to the Pawtucket church, to that effect, that, such a step ought immediately to be taken. But what next? *You* dear brother capped the climax, by adding your testimony, to what I feel authorised to call a most *horrible doctrine*:—a doctrine which if *legitimately carried out*, would subvert the whole gospel of God. I am glad you now see it so.—God save you from ever again leaving the *bible rule*, and following in the track of selfish expediency: I shall never forget those words of yours—“You will not shew your penitence, Ray, unless you do it:” that is, request to be excluded from the church, and thereby to be *considered* as having *no* interest in the kingdom of God and his mercy, when I was well assured that at that moment my name was written in heaven, whatever others might think of me. O my brother, shew my penitence by thus turning away from the *truth*, and committing such a deed as this! God forgive you for proffering such counsel, and me for following it. But I was overcome. *All* of this was too much. I called for the pen and ink as you well remember, and wrote the dreadful *unscriptural* request, for the church to exclude me: for Archippus said unless I requested it many of them would not do it. Thank God that there were *some* preserved from doing it, although I in my weakness and folly *did* request it. You well remember, I strove to find some countenance from the bible for this step; and the nearest I could come to it, was to quote where Miriam was shut out of the camp, seven days after the sedition against Moses!!! Not only, is selfish expediency the road of *wickedness*, but it makes all of its votaries appear consummately *foolish*, in trying to find scripture and reason to support it. There is no doubt however, but what my quotation was as *much* in point as any thing to be found within the lids of the bible authorising the step which I then took.—Nevertheless, Archippus seemed well pleased with his vic-

tory. But what next? The very thing which he so vehemently urged in order to *save* a division in the church, *caused* a division. No sooner did they come together and the proposition was laid before them for my excommunication, than certain brethren arose and demanded *bible authority*, for such a course. Not a syllable could be quoted to support it. All the authority that could be urged, was, "that it was *for the best*, and I had requested it—" and although many were carried away with the delusions, whose intentions were evidently good, and who soon retraced their steps, yet, a number stood firm and invulnerable, to all the sophistry of the doctrine of selfish expediency.— They said I had been before them, and made my confession, and implored forgiveness; and the bible left them but *one course*, to pursue; and that was, forgiveness—the very doctrine which Archippus had been preaching in respect to his *own case*. Let me here say it is as impossible to separate *forgiveness* in this case from *fellowship*, as it is to separate them in God's forgiving a sinner for Christ's sake. Here, as I have before said, these brethren took their stand—on the *bible*; in opposition to all which Archippus could urge; backed up, too, by my request. And, here I would call upon you with me to adore the wisdom of God, who made these obscure brethren, the inflexible defenders of the great doctrine of forgiveness, through Christ, when almost all that were *prominent* in the church, turned away from the truth; and when the generality of professors all around them, from the great D. D's. downward, united their testimony against them and in favor of that awful doctrine of *disobeying the commands of God, in order that good may come*. But this was the fact:—and here commenced the contest which has been carried on ever since. Here is the division between Archippus with his doctrine, adherents, practice, and almost all the professed christian community on the one hand, and the few, who have dared to contend for bible truth, on the other. Now, as this is the great point in dispute—as Archippus finally brought a charge against these brethren to exclude them from the church

for causing divisions, founded on Romans 16—17—and because I confessed to the church that I did wrong, in falling in with the importunities of Archippus, and requesting the church to exclude me, Archippus has accused me of shewing thereby my impenitence for my sin—and has said that by this course of conduct, I have committed *more sin*; than if I had been the father of seven bastards—seeing I say all turns on *this* point—let us see in order to find out, who are really the *guilty, unscriptural* authors of this division, whether the position, which Archippus took in respect to my exclusion, was according to the *doctrine* of Christ or not. You will remember that the whole passage reads thus—“Now I beseech you, brethren mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the DOCTRINE which ye have learned, and avoid them.” Now, the question, is, where are we to *go*, to learn doctrine? Why, the whole Protestant world say, (by profession) to the bible. Well, if Archippus’s doctrine, in the stand which he took, is to be found in the *bible*, those who opposed him, have been the wicked authors of a division:—but, if *they* have acted in *accordance* with the doctrine to be found in the scriptures, and *he* has opposed them *contrary* to scripture, why, then, HE and those who are with him, are before GOD the GUILTY authors of division. But, where is the bible authority for excluding from the church a brother who comes before them, confesses his sin, declares he repents and begs for mercy—I say where is the doctrine, for this course to be found? Not in the word of God, my brother. No—Archippus was called upon in vain for one syllable to support his position. He never produced any, that come any nearer to it, than my quotation respecting Miniam!—I, myself, asked him, if there was any direction in the scriptures, how a church should act in relation to such a case as mine? and he *unequivocally*, answered, that there was not—but it must be left to the judgment of the church or people. And this sentiment has been practically carried out by the great body of professors both ministers and people in respect to my case all through this region:—and I

would ask you, how far is this from the latitude of Rome; the MOTHER OF HARLOTS, as the Protestants say? Why, what is the very *bone* of contention between professed Protestants and Papists? This is it. The Catholics contend that the CHURCH, through the POPE, shall dictate to the people their faith and practice:—but the Protestants contend that this is *Anti-Christian*; and that the naked, plain, and unsophisticated word of God, is the only rule of faith and practice. This, I say, is the profession of the great body of Protestants of the present day; but, if on examination they are not found in general, to be *essentially* in their *practice*, on the very ground which they so war against, in the Romish Church, then I am altogether mistaken. Verily, this was the ground assumed by Archippus, and which he has ever since maintained. But how is it respecting the stand taken by these few brethren? Is *this*, supported by the word of God? Yes it is. The bible is full of it. It is in accordance with the *example* of God, who forgives and receives into his fellowship the greatest of sinners; the greatest of backsliders, the *moment* they repent, and turn to him. And we are commanded in the word of God to forgive each other, “AS GOD FOR CHRIST’S SAKE FORGIVES US.” Perhaps, there is no subject in the New Testament more clearly set forth—more clearly enjoined, by the threatening of awful penalties, than that of forgiving a sinning brother who turns and says he repents:—Well, then these brethren clearly took the bible for the man of their counsel; and Archippus, opposed them—and if he and those who have acted with him be not the GUILTY authors of the division, then the bible com-

* The subterfuge of making a distinction, here, between *forgiveness* and *fellowship*, I will attend to in its proper place; only just remarking now that those who urge it, to be consistent, although they may pray God to *forgive* them, ought not to ask him to *fellowship* them; i. e. forgive them, and then cast them out with devils! for, observe, we are to forgive each other, as God for Christ’s sake forgives us.

mands are all null and void. Yet, the very first *shew* of scripture authority, for his proceedings in the church, was, to bring forward the afore-named passage in Romans as authority to excommunicate these brethren for causing divisions!! But God is the judge; and moreover his *word* shall judge us in the last day! Now, in order to see the enormity of his doctrine, I beg you to look at it, as he declared it in your hearing, at your house. After I had consented to request to be excluded from the church, he renewed his protestations of confidence in my piety—and of his sincere fellowship of me as a christian, and with his hand upon his heart, while the other was uplifted, made the following memorable expression, which will never be erased from my mind. He said (and you heard him,) **THAT WHEN HE LIFTED HIS HAND TO VOTE ME OUT OF THE CHURCH, OR TO WITHDRAW FELLOWSHIP FROM ME, HE SHOULD, AT THE SAME TIME, FELLOWSHIP ME IN HIS HEART!!!** Yes, *here* is his doctrine and practice, which, I believe, was approved of, by the great majority of ministers and people through this region. I know he has since altered his position, by saying that he does not believe me penitent:—but *why* did he alter his mind in respect to this? Why, because I retracted from this awful stand, which he was the great means of my taking; and confessed to the church that I did wrong in consenting to such horrible sentiments. This course in me, has given him and multitudes of others, indubitable proof that I am impenitent! I beg of you, to keep your eye upon the doctrine—see what it amounts to; and tell me how I could help turning away from it with horror. He believed me **THEN** to be a christian; truly penitent for my sins—in the favor and fellowship of God and an heir of heaven. And what did this *cost*, if it were as he believed? Why, the regenerating influences of the Almighty spirit of God, to make me a new creature, and the infinite atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ's blood and death to justify me; and yet, while he *believed* all this in his *heart* he would *say* to the world by lifting up his hand to with-

draw fellowship from me, that I was a child of the devil, and destitute of religion!!! This, was what *public sentiment*, of which he and others have so much talked of, called for to be done—it demanded that I should not be owned by the church as a *christian*; and this act of excommunication, was to respond to the call, and say—"Yes world; it is even so as you say—and we agree with you in counting this man a publican and heathen." Now, with awful solemnity, I ask you what was this, if legitimately carried out, but counting the work of the Holy Ghost, which he then believed I had on my heart, the work of the devil; and casting out the blood of the son of God, to be trampled under foot by men as an unholy thing! I say, what else is it and what has saved him, and those who have acted with him from blaspheming against the Holy Ghost in this transaction but not doing the deed with malice in their hearts? The Jews, involved themselves in this great and unpardonable sin, by saying, that the work of the spirit of God, was the work of Belzebub. They undoubtedly did it, with burning malice in their hearts, against the spirit of God. I trust it was not so with Archippus and those who have acted with him. Yet, at the very moment, he truly believed, as he said, that I was a child of grace—at a moment when I was willing to forsake all sin, and obey every known command of God, he said *to the world* as I have just now hinted—"Here, I have no fellowship for this man as a christian—he is in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity." Now I ask you dear brother, what was this but **'THROWING AWAY THE WHOLE GOSPEL.'**—Can you make any thing less of it. No. And this is what I meant, in my Address to the people of Pawtucket—and because I have turned away from this position, out of love to the gospel and truth I am for *so doing*, counted impenitent. And because these brethren never would accede to it, they have been charged by Archippus, his *tutors* and pupils, in this doctrine, as the guilty authors of divisions, and the destroyers of the church's peace and prosperity! O who could have conceived that the professed orthodox

friends of the gospel had almost lost sight of its real truths, so generally:—for this position of Archippus, has been, no doubt, as he boasted, the position of the Christian public, almost universally through the land. The question was not, whether I was a christian or not—had repented of my sin or not:—but, I must be excommunicated *at all events*; **FOR THE GOOD OF THE CAUSE.** And what cause? Why, the gospel cause. And what is the gospel? Why forgiveness to the vilest of sinners who turn to God: yet to *forgive* a vile sinner, would very much hurt the great and glorious doctrine of forgiveness! and *not* to forgive him, would be the best way to reduce it to practice!!!! This is the plain, unsophisticated illustration of the course of Archippus; and can but shew you, how the blessed doctrine of forgiveness, preached by Christ, and the apostles; and was the rock on which Luther stood, to overthrow Popery, has been almost exploded by their professed disciples; and the doctrine of the *Pharisees*, and of doing *penance*, according to the prescription of the Romish church, *virtually*, at least substituted in its stead. O my brother, how little did I realize this state of things before my fall. I know not but God will make my *death* in this respect, the means of slaying more than my life. Keep this subject in view, I pray you, while I pursue my narrative in my next.

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER X.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*,) OCT. 17TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

You perceive I date this in prison. Yes; I am followed to the extent of what is termed *civil law*, so far as imprisonment is concerned, on the complaint of that old *friend* of mine, that minister of the gospel (?) of whom I spake, in a former communication. I am sentenced to six months imprisonment, in a most loathsome prison—said to

be the most loathsome in the United States. This, no doubt, will be food to his soul:—for it is just what he wanted. Many times have I, not only given him a trifle myself, to help him in distress and want, but have again and again *begged* of others, for his benefit. I have but little doubt, if you were to question the christian propriety of this conduct of his, but what he would do *me* farther injury to justify *himself*. But, I leave it. I am not sorry that I have tried to do him good. If I have opportunity, I will do him good still. By the way—you here have a specimen of the righteousness and equality of *civil government*, as it is administered in this land. For a number of months were my rights invaded, by a reckless mob—and my family made wretched, as I have shewn you:—and this, under pretence of driving me away—when I was put under bonds by the supreme tribunal of the state not to go! Did the officers of justice use their authority to protect me? No! but left me to the mercy of these blood hounds. And moreover, I can prove, that one civil officer said, that he would hold me, to let one of my enemies beat me! This, was the protection that the civil government gave me, when *my* rights were invaded; yet when I was found to be a transgressor, I was visited with its utmost severity. Again—I believe that no public man in this State, has ever come out before the community, and humbled himself and confessed his sin, in the manner which I have done; and still I believe no man was ever indicted for the same offence, in this state before.* Now, why is it that unbridled licentiousness, has rolled over this state, like a poisonous flood—bearing on its current, men from the highest *official standing*, down to the lowest black-leg, that walks the streets, and this law has lain dormant, for perhaps more than a hundred years, until a transgressor is found, who humbles himself before God and man, imploring mercy and forgiveness and on *him alone*, fixes its penalty. I say why, should *I* have been sin-

* I have since learned that a black man was indicted some years ago. I have never heard of any other instance.

gled out? My brother; not even my inveterate opposers, can have the *face* to say that it is on account of the *sin*—the *crime*. No! for if it were, thousands of others, would not pass on in the same transgression with impunity. This is an irresistible inference. Observe, I am not in this place passing sentence of condemnation on this *law*—I am only enquiring why *I* should be singled out, as the only man to feel its *penalty*. Ah, my brother, David was not the only man who could utter the following words with the utmost propriety: “For lo they lie in wait for my soul: the mighty are gathered against me: NOT FOR MY SIN, NOR MY TRANSGRESSIONS O LORD.” No; if God had not enabled me by the power of truth to slay many Philistines on the field of moral conflict *before* my fall, I should not be ‘grinding in the prison house.’ No, it is for *truth* which I *have* told; the *good* which I *have* done, that I am here. But they have not *put out my eyes!* I see the pillars of the house, where the *Lords* and *Nobles* are regaling themselves over my fall and wretchedness. If my God shall please *again* to give me strength, more of them may be slain by my death, than my life. But, although there needs to be a volume written on this subject, I must not enlarge.* I hasten to my narrative respecting the dealings of the church. I wish you to refresh your memory with the contents of my last: particularly with the point, the **GRAND POINT** in controversy, between Archippus and those who agree with him, and those brethren, whose

* I ought in justice to say, that the conduct of the Attorney General towards me, through the whole of his official duties, has, so far as I know, been gentlemanly and humane. He has not appeared disposed to inflict **EXTRA** vengeance on me, to gratify the cravings of a revengeful appetite in himself or others. Although, by his official obligations, he was obliged to urge the prosecution against me; yet his conduct has been such, that so far from sinking him in my estimation, has laid me under grateful obligations to him. The High Sheriff, too, has appeared disposed to treat me kindly. I wish I could say as much of all the official characters, who, have had to do with my case.

views I advocate. Archippus's doctrine, on which he started, you remember, was, that of excluding a *Christian*, whom he believed, at that moment enjoyed the favor and fellowship of God, in order to satisfy the demands of the world—and the others totally condemned it. You ought to understand in this place, that before my fall, there were men in the church, who, because I stood in *their way*, and opposed them in what I thought to be wrong and wicked, seemed to hate me with a bitter hatred; and consequently, were ready, the moment I fell, to pounce upon me, and keep me down if in their power, forever. Of this number a prominent one, was a person, who for a number of years, I had loved, above, perhaps, any one in the church; but who, at the moment I felt compelled to oppose some of his conduct, arraigned his influence against me. I was now in a situation, in which he no doubt felt a complete *triumph* over me. The last time I spake with him, was to kneel down at his feet, and implore his forgiveness for my sin—and he assured me that *he would not hurt me*: and yet, I believe God knows, that he has exerted every faculty, which he possessed, to do me all the injury which he could, ever since. He and Archippus united heart and hand, in their treatment of me, with those under their influence. And with them another person, united and throwed all of his influence against me, from whom, on account of the *relation* which he held to me, I might reasonably have hoped for compassion. God pity them all; and shew them what they did in putting their feet on a fallen, imploring brother. Well, they all rallied around Archippus's doctrinal and practical standard: and Archippus moved forward in his work of *cutting me in pieces*. You know I do not mean *literally*. If you will not consider me childish and visionary, I will here relate another *dream*, to explain my meaning. Understand, I do not build any doctrine, nor enforce any duty, contrary to scripture and reason from dreams. Nor will I say *positively* that the one I am now about to relate was from the Lord. Be that as it may; it will answer an excellent purpose, to illustrate Archippus's

conduct towards me. A little girl, entirely unacquainted with the circumstances, when he commenced his work, which I shall presently more fully develope, dreamed that she saw him literally cut me up in inch pieces—then roasting me, and putting *pepper* and *salt* on me, began to *eat me*: saying, “I was too good to be thrown away.” Now it is worthy of note, that when he began his work of ‘cutting me in pieces,’ he owned as I have already shewn, that he believed me to be a christian—that is; “too good to be thrown away”—and contended that he was a *great friend to me*—that was “eating me!” The little girl, was so affected in her sleep with the sight, and the scene was so sickening, that she was actually awakened with vomiting! Now, Archippus, may talk all of his days and *shed tears* as evidence, of his sincerity; yet, every impartial, disinterested christian, in full view of his doctrine and practice, in relation to this affair, can but be heart-sick, and turn away with disgust:—for his doctrine is, to count one whom he acknowledges to be a child of God, an heir of glory, a publican and heathen, a child of the devil, in order to please the world! But I soon began to feel, most sensibly, his *cutting strokes*; for in order to maintain his ground, he rapidly developed a disposition to make the worst of my case: to wink, *at least*, at the most wicked and unfounded accusations against me, and to be a most hearty coadjutor and companion, of those who left no stone unturned to sink me to the lowest depths of wretchedness and disgrace. His own accusations were the most cutting, of almost any-thing which has ever been inflicted on me, since I had a being. For instance—because I from a sense of duty, from a regard to truth and the commands of God, retracted from the stand which I took, in accordance with his entreaties, and confessed to the church, that I had done wrong in wishing to be excluded; he represented me as being interested by *selfish motives* to get into the church: because I wanted to preach &c. The great day of God, when the secrets of all hearts are revealed, I *know*, will shew him that this was a most false and wicked accusation. At the

very moment he made it, if the most popular denomination in christendom, had freely offered me their fellowship and approbation as a *preacher*, on condition of my subscribing their creed, and conforming to all of their maxims, it would have been no temptation to have acceded to the proposal. My dear brother, you need have no doubt of the truth of this. The same things would have kept me from it, that kept me from such a course, before my fall—i. e. not that I doubt but what there are many, very many true believers in the different denominations; but, because *as* denominations, they hold to many things which I believe to be awfully corrupt, erroneous and Anti-Christian. Never did I more sincerely desire to know the will of God, concerning me, nor more sincerely to do every duty than at the very time that Archippus was laying these things to my charge. He said, that I no sooner found out that the church was about to engage a preacher, for a year, than I urged my reception. He said that my friends, made use of the doctrine of forgiveness, as a *hobby*, on which to ride me into the church. If I maintained any regard to principle, and was fixed and determined not to give up truth, he accused me of *stubbornness*. He made a great handle of this. I have understood that he said the best way to get me out of the place, would be to get a hundred respectable men to sign a request, for me to stay: Whether he made this remark or not, I am assured that he made many, full as injurious, and as well calculated to set the mobocratic blood hounds upon me. He has ever and constantly accused me of inducing and influencing those brethren in their course, who have opposed him in his; although he knew, as well as he knew that he lived, that this stand was taken against him, at his very first start, by a number, directly *contrary* to the advice which I gave them!!! If I *had* led them, in this righteous course, it would have been far more commendable in me, than to have submitted myself to be led as I did by him, into the mazes of wicked, selfish expediency. But I did *not* lead them. No; I cannot claim *that* honor. The truth is, after I wrote the com-

unication of retraction to the church, already alluded to, and which has so displeased Archippus, I hesitated about ending it in, and delayed until these brethren, earnestly treated me to give it into *their hands*, that they might resent it. He has not only most falsely and wickedly accused *me*, but he has done *them*, as great injustice. However, this was his course; and he has pursued it, in unison with others, to whom I have alluded, ever since. At an early date after my return home from those places I had been driven to by the mob, Archippus visited me. I learn, that it was from my conversation with him at this time, that he has gathered one of the greatest evidences of my impenitence. I ventured to tell him a *little truth, in respect to his own conduct*: and this you know in view of most religionists, who have judged of my case, is point blank evidence of my impenitence! His doctrine, you know, was, that I ought not to be in the church on account of public sentiment. Now the fact was, in his *own neighborhood*, public sentiment as strongly accused him of immorality, as did me. Accordingly I applied his own rule—*his own law* which he brought forward to condemn me to himself! *This* he could not endure—and this no doubt was the conclusive evidence that he obtained of my impenitence! I told him plainly that “If he thought I ought not to be in the church on account of *public sentiment*, why not himself talk out, in obedience to the same law?” This you will readily perceive, was an irresistible argument, so far as truth was concerned; for, it is a proverb, no more common than true, “That it is a bad rule, that will not work both ways.” But the advocates of selfish expediency, you observe, do not like to be governed *themselves*, by the laws which they enact for others. Archippus, was now in a dilemma. And how has he tried to extricate himself? Why, one way has been, by making a great ado, about my *hard talk* to him. This, he has dwelt upon ever since; and here is no telling how many he has prejudiced against me, and induced them to believe me impenitent by telling them of my hard talk to *him*. No doubt it was a *hard argument*

—for by his own law he was condemned; but I am not conscious that there was any thing *harder* than *that* connected with it. Indeed, suppose my *manner* had been ever so hard, what difference did that make to the argument?—The question was, if he really thought it my duty to God and his people, to go out of the church, because public sentiment condemned me as being destitute of religion, why was it not his duty, in obedience to the same public sentiment to take *himself* out of the way? This question he has never fairly answered. Nor can he answer it fairly without admitting my inference—nor can any of his supporters answer it any other way; and thus out of their own mouths, are they condemned before God and man! This, as the lawyer said to the farmer, altered the case—and this, as I before said, brought Archippus into a *dilemma*; and now for an *expediency twist*, in order to get clear. And what was it? Why he says, “No one of the charges against me was ever *proved* to be true!” Well, suppose for arguments sake, they never had been proved, yet, if public sentiment said *they were true*, what difference did it make?—For his doctrine was, that PUBLIC SENTIMENT, was the criterion to determine whether a man shall belong to the church; and not the truth! Was not this his doctrine which he started upon? Which he advocated at your house, when he made that memorable expression, “That when he lifted his hand to withdraw fellowship from me, he should at *the same moment* fellowship me in his heart?” And why would he lift his hand to *pretend* to withdraw fellowship from me in view of the world at the moment he *really* fellowshiped me in his heart? Why; because public sentiment bid him—therefore whether the charges were true or false, if public sentiment said they were, he ought, to have been consistent, to have obeyed its commands, and walked out of the church!! This is logic that I know to be invulnerable; a child can see that it cannot be overthrown: and thus you see the dilemma, in which Archippus was placed. But to proceed. “Not one of the charges (he said) has been proved against me.” Archippus has left me no oth-

or resort but to *meet* him here. I dread to do it—but it must be done or I cannot place the whole subject before you as truth demands. Well, the charges, at best, were that he had grossly insulted a number of females. I will give his own disposal of one of them. A woman that lived in his house, and was and still is a respectable member of one of the largest churches in Pawtucket, made *this* charge against him, ‘That he so haunted her with licentious overtures, or unchaste insults, that she dare not stay alone in her tenement; and did actually request her neighbor’s children to come in and stay with her, on that account’—this was the amount of it, as can be abundantly proved. Well Archippus disposes of it in the following way, in a confession to a number of individuals—“That he prevailed on her to consent to commit adultery with him, and then he refused to commit the act!” I say this is the *amount* of his confession. I make this remark, because you very well know that if you accuse many persons of making a statement, if you do not get the exact *words* they will deny it—but all that truth demands, is to get the import—and this I have done. I will give the testimony of one witness in this place, with the *assertion*, that there are a number of others, that can be brought forward to testify to the same, if the facts are disputed. This one is Mrs. W.—already referred to, and I prefer to bring her forward, because she and Archippus are *now* most heartily united, in their conduct towards me. You must bear with any indelicacy in the expressions, if you think there is any; for the circumstances require me to give you her testimony. Her statement before a number of witnesses was this—“Why (said she) he confessed to me, that he worked upon her, until he got her willing, and then went off and left her—and who (said she,) can help being mad with such a man as that.”—Moreover, she said, “I had covered up, his cheating and conniving, until I had nothing left to cover up with.” Observe I do not charge him with cheating and conniving; but this is Mrs. W.’s testimony, which she repeated over and over again, and which she will not now deny: if she does,

a host of witnesses are ready to testify that she did. Yet this same woman, subsequently, in order to carry on her war against me, took him into her fellowship, notwithstanding his positive denial before the church, that he had made any such confession as she here declares *she heard him make!* According to her own testimony, how careful she was not to fellowship iniquity! And yet, this is the very woman who would not say that she would forgive me when I implored it of her on my knees—and who has pretended to be so afraid of fellowshipping sin, that she could not fellowship the church, if I were in it, and some others, whose piety, at least, in my opinion, would not suffer in comparison with her own. O my brother, how crooked are the workings of selfishness. I told you that by my fall, the thoughts of many hearts have been revealed. Now if this woman's testimony is *not* true, then Archippus is fellowshipping a person that has awfully lied about him—with his eyes open too. But if it *be* true, then what becomes of his assertion, that he never made such a confession?—Again, if her testimony is true, then is *she* fellowshipping awful iniquity; *herself being witness*. In the name of truth, I ask you to look at this. And these are the folks, who have since my fall, held me by the throat with an inexorable grasp, while they have thrust me through and through, or, as the little girl dreamed, cut me in pieces. O how conscientiously scrupulous they have appeared to be, about *who* they fellowshipped!! But to return—here is his *own confession*, according to the testimony of one of his present advocates and coadjutors; and yet he declared, that not one of the charges had ever been proved against him—would not confess that he had done any thing immoral—and has said that even the Moral Reform Society, would not consider his conduct immoral! My brother, here you see the effects of travelling in the road of selfish expediency. If that man had kept out of it, I have no idea that he would ever have made such *crooks* as this—but any man that undertakes a *passage* on it, will act in a similar manner:—for, there is not a *straight place an inch long, the*

whole length of it. Behold what crooked work even Abraham made, when he undertook to travel it by denying that Sarah was his wife! In God's name, I warn you *never* to put your foot upon it. But to return; this was the stand taken by Archippus, that none of these charges had been proved against him—that he had done nothing immoral, and that what he meant by his confession, respecting giving an occasion, was that he had been light and trifling in his conversation, &c! With this position, many of God's most devoted children in the church, were exceedingly grieved. They considered it to be *virtually taking back* what *they* understood that he meant by his confession, and a flat contradiction of what he had himself confessed to a number of individuals; and they finally determined to call him to an account before the church to reconcile his *own* statements at least. But what next? Why the *hue and cry* was now raised, that *he* was opposed *only* because he would not fellowship me—that on this account they were determined to get him out of the church—that I was at the bottom of it, and that we should not rest until all who were opposed to me, were excluded. You can hardly imagine how generally this was believed—and yet without the least foundation in truth. If I can judge at all by conduct and conversation, the undivided desire of us all was, that he might be humble—do as he ought, in making as limited a confession as the nature of the case would admit, and remain in the church. This was the burden of hours of prayer. But his statement was enough. Under this cover he seemed to rest secure from the wrath of that public sentiment, to which he has all along, so reverentially bowed. In the mean time Mrs. W. was abundant in her labors against me—decrying me down and making my case look as aggravating as possible. This went a great way with many: she being looked upon, as a woman of such *extraordinary piety*. Every report against me, however unfounded she seemed to take pleasure in circulating.—Among others, she asserted that my family had for a long time been jealous of me. My eldest daughter, grieved at

such an apparent disposition to follow her fallen father, with the poisonous weapons of slander and false accusations, sent a letter into the church, contradicting the assertion, respecting the jealousy of my family. Mrs. W. declared that she lied! This daughter, so far as I know, had always been beyond the least just reproach, in her morals. If I were disposed to boast of the virtue of relatives, none could have better ground to speak in the highest terms of commendation than I, of this beloved child. But every thing that stood in the way of Mrs. W.—in “persecuting him whom God had smitten,” and in “talking to the grief of those whom he had wounded,” must take the lash of her tongue: and from hence my virtuous and innocent child, must be branded by her as a liar. I pray God, that she may remember, that he who hath said, “thou shalt not commit adultery,” hath also said thou “shalt not bear false witness,” and that she may repent of her awful *transgressions* of this holy commandment. I shall pursue this narrative in my next.

I remain most affectionately Yours,
RAY POTTER.

LETTER XI.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison*,) OCT. 17TH. 1837.

My dear Brother :—

In this communication, you must indulge me with a little repetition. In the close of my last, in shewing the cordial fellowship, which existed finally, between Archippus and Mrs. W. I rather anticipated, what more properly belonged in another place. I should first have told you *how* this union of heart was brought about. *This* you will now soon learn. I hasten to the narrative. The course pursued by Mrs. W. was extremely grievous to many in the church, who felt disposed to obey the law of love and mercy, enjoined upon them by God towards a fallen brother—

As I hinted in my last. in pretending to shew indiana-

tion, at *my* sin she most aggravatingly transgressed another command of the decalogue. I mean that which forbids bearing false witness. This, she did, not only by accusing my daughter of lying, in the manner already alluded to in my last, but by taking up every report, however false, that was injurious to me, to sink me as low as possible in disgrace: for you will perceive that *this* was the only way that she, and others who acted with her, could keep themselves in countenance, in refusing to shew me mercy. But what could be done? She was considered a *pattern* of piety—a saint of the *first class*; and was now especially applauded by those who were jealous of my ever rising again. Those, who were grieved with her conduct, readily enough anticipated the consequences of instituting against her a course of discipline. On this gross assault, however, on the character of my daughter, they felt as if duty demanded their action; accordingly, she was complained of before the church on a charge of slander. I will venture to say that it was a righteous and just accusation. But what next? Why, Archippus, who, but a few months before, had been incessant in his complaints against her, for *slandering himself*; who declared he was never talked so hard to, by any person as by her—yes, the same woman who had just been so *offensive* to him all at once became remarkably agreeable! He unqualifiedly rose up in her justification, at the onset; carrying the idea constantly that she was only complained of, because she was opposed to me. And now, also, Mrs. W. *all at once* become mightily in favor of Archippus: the man, that but a short time before, she declared she believed to be guilty of *worse* licentious conduct, than any before alluded to—who declared that he made the confession in *her* presence, and that of a respectable member of the Baptist church, which I stated in my last—and, who not only charged him of being guilty of all *this*, but also declared that she had covered up, and covered up his cheating and conniving, until she had nothing left to cover up with!! Now, all at once I say, she heartily fellowshiped him; without the least retraction on his part, since

she had made these charges—for she made them again and again, *after* his confession to the church, wherein he acknowledged that he had “given an occasion” &c. What do you think of this? Is it incredible? But if she or Archippus denies one particle of it, an overwhelming cloud of respectable witnesses are at hand, to prove every iota of it. Now I wish to stop, here, long enough to ask one or two plain questions:—If this woman opposed me out of love to God and his holy law, because I had *sinned*, how was it, that at the same instant she could take into the arms of her fellowship a man, who was guilty of what she declared *him* to be? I leave to your candor to decide if she has not here clearly detected herself—*caught herself*, as the proverb is; and developed the *motive* that influenced her—namely, selfishness:—for, observe, at the moment she needed Archippus’s *help*, and he began to *help* her, she took him into her fellowship, though she had before so unqualifiedly condemned him. It will avail nothing for her to say, that it was all settled; he having been before the church, and asked forgiveness:—for, as I before stated, she repeated these charges against him again and again *after* he went before the church: and it was *after* this, too, that she declared she could not fellowship him—that she could not take bread from his hands at the communion—and that she seated herself so as to avoid it. Now one of two things is incontrovertibly true; she was either guilty of a course of most outrageous, and wicked slander and lying, in respect to Archippus, or, in fellowshiping him, she has fellowshiped awful iniquity. Let her take which horn of the dilemma she pleases. She *must* take one or the other. If the first be true, ought such unlimited confidence to be placed in her talk about *others*, as has been by many? If the second be true, how much are her *pretensions* worth, about refusing *me* fellowship (although I implored her forgiveness on my knees) for fear of fellowshiping iniquity.—Now, whether I am a saint or devil, makes no difference here. I state facts; and you perceive that she is brought into this dilemma, by her *own testimony*. I give this

woman's conduct such a *prominence* in this place, for two reasons: one is because she has been often quoted as authority why I should not be fellowshipped. No one person, perhaps, has had the influence in this neighborhood to crush me that she has had. It would be said, "There is that godly old mother in Israel—she says so and so, and it must be so." Another object I have in view, is, to shew how easily we may be deceived in respect to the *motives* which influence us. How deceitful is the human heart! I doubt not but that woman, at times, has made herself believe that she was opposed to me from *holy* motives. I must confess in this place, that her conduct towards me since my fall is a just chastisement from God; however wicked it has been in *her*—for, I for a long time, *almost*, if not quite, idolized her as a saint—I believe she became extremely Pharisical and lifted up, and when I fell, her *pride* was deeply mortified. She became angry; and in order to maintain her high standing for piety, with many, it was necessary for her to oppose me. I trust she has been a subject of grace and I pray God that she may be brought to a humble repentance for doing as she has done. In *her* conduct, you may have an illustration, too, of that of most who have acted with her. For instance; the person, who took such unwearied pains to make me out a *liar*—who was so apparently conscientious about not fellowshipping me for fear I was not penitent—yet when Archippus's conduct was laid down before him, in all of its enormities, he hesitated not a moment to take it up and swallow it, as if it were honey! And so with many others. Now this proves *one* thing to a demonstration:—Admitting they *were* opposing *sin* in *me*; they could not oppose it from a right *motive*, while they fellowshipped it in him; and it is a truth which ought to have a most solemn hearing from all men—*That, to oppose sin from a wrong MOTIVE, will as surely condemn us in the sight of God, and if we die in it, will as surely shut us up in hell, as to commit adultery.* My object in these communications, is, to bring out truth from circumstances connected with my fall— and I think here is one of vast importance;

but which is generally overlooked. I return from this long digression to my narrative. The note was now sounded longer and louder than ever, that Archippus and Mrs. W. were assailed, and brought before the church solely because they were opposed to me. This was I think, generally believed. No matter what was said to the contrary. No matter what protestations were made that there were just and scriptural grounds, for a course of discipline with them:—the extraordinary piety of Mrs. W. swept all of these protestations and arguments before it. The voice of a penitent sinner, crying for mercy could not be heard in the midst of the clamor. Another thing very much helped them in these declamations. The brethren who called Archippus and Mrs. W. to an account, ventured to call for an inquiry into a certain charge against the person alluded to, in my last, as evidently owing me a grudge, before my fall, and who has so industriously labored, since, to injure me. The same construction was put on *this* that was put on the other cases. Here, was a three-fold cord which they thought was not easily broken. Here, according to *their* testimony were three innocent persons, *falsely* accused and brought before the church, *simply* and *solely*, because they would not fellowship iniquity in me.

The Apostle says that “*charity* covereth a multitude of sins:” but this doctrine of the apostle was evidently reversed by them. *They* practiced on the principle that *my* sin, covereth a multitude of sins in *themselves!!* Yes, *my* sin, although I had repented of it and asked forgiveness, was a sufficient covering for all of *their* iniquities—however numerous and aggravating. Only join the army in denouncing and crying me down, and they were instantly made whole. Here was instant cure for their own leprosy! My brother, you may stare but this is not a fable—Was not this demonstrated in the practice of Archippus and Mrs. W. in their conduct towards each other? It was not confined to them. It became quite general. I am afraid that many will go to the judgment, without any other covering for their iniquities. Deceived souls; will they find

themselves to be, if on *this* ground, they adventure into eternity and appear before God! I forgot to mention in its proper place, that those who meant to stand on bible ground in respect to my case, gained ground—i. e. many who through the sophistry of Archippus voted for my exclusion, saw the wickedness of his doctrine, repudiated it, and in a short time, the vote of exclusion was reversed, and I was restored to the fellowship of the church. But now, was a favorable time, for Archippus and his associates to make a grand effort again, to carry his points. The story that my friends were bent upon excluding *him*, and a number of other innocent persons from the church, solely because they were *opposed to me*, answered his purpose admirably. Before my fall, it was almost impossible to get a person out of the church, though their conduct were notoriously wicked; for Archippus would almost always meet a motion for exclusion, with a proposition to delay; and there were many persons retained, utterly unfit for fellowship. *Now* nothing could equal his zeal to cleanse the church by getting rid of me. He moved forward in what *he* termed this work of God! There were a number of persons scattered through the country, whose names were on the church book, but who could only be termed *nominal* members, because they had not for a long time, appeared to interest themselves at all in its concerns. Some of them had been absent for years, without ever attending a church meeting. Three or four who resided in Sutton, a distance of twenty-five miles, I believe were never in a church meeting at all. Two or three of these were relatives of Archippus. He now commenced his work of visiting these scattering members, preparatory to making an effort to *cleanse* the church. I believe he spent about a week of constant riding through the country, to warn them to attend church meeting. As I have already said, his story, that my friends were designing to exclude him and a number of other innocent persons from the church, *solely* because they would not fellowship iniquity, was well calculated to prepare them for action. The time arrived for church meet-

ing. It appeared that of *male* members present, there was a small majority, who were more or less, under the influence of his views—the brethren on the other side, having had little apprehension of his undertaking to effect his purposes; and had not exerted themselves as they otherwise might have done, to gather in those who were cordially with them. The first thing to be done, was, to have his own case, that of Mrs. W. and the other person alluded to, dismissed from farther consideration. You will remember that this was a meeting for *cleansing the church*: I mean this was the professed object of Archippus. I ought to have stated of the whole number present, males and females, there was a large majority against him. Although, from the first constitution of the church, up to the time this difficulty commenced, the right of the female members to have a voice in respect to who they should fellowship, was never before questioned, yet now it was stoutly denied by Archippus and his party. If females have no right to *say* who they will fellowship, then it legitimately follows, that they are not *subjects* of fellowship themselves. This is clear—and sufficiently shews, the abomination of the doctrine maintained in respect to their *rights*, by many churches and professors. They would act nobly, in withdrawing from all churches who virtually tell them that they have no *conscience* by denying them the privilege of saying who they will fellowship and who they will not. But to return; the work of *cleansing the church*, now goes on. Archippus gets up, and by way of explaining what he meant in his former confession, that he “had given an occasion,” &c. he did all which he could to make the impression on the minds of those who were unacquainted with the facts, that his fault only consisted in light and trifling talk! He has also strove, to make the impression, that my friends raised and circulated the reports respecting him, to injure him because he was opposed to me—when the truth was, that these reports were freely talked of, by a number of the members of *another church* (who now indeed appear to have great fellowship for him!) before my friends, or myself had

scarcely heard a lisp of them:—and long before my fall: and of course, before any difficulty existed between him and us, in respect to *my case*. Before my fall, too, they became *common talk*, in the neighborhood among saints and sinners—and in view of *this*, he come before the church and made his confession already alluded to. I well remember, and no doubt *he* well remembers how he seemed after returning from a certain camp meeting, about the time he made his confession, in view of these same reports respecting him, and in view of them *he talked of withdrawing from his official station in the church*—This was all before my fall, and yet he now comes forward and charges us with raising and circulating these reports about him, because he would not fellowship me!!! Where is conscience? * In vain was it, that two or three men arose and declared that he had made the confession to *them*, already alluded to, of his prevailing with a certain person, &c. The design, was, to *cleans*e the church, and it was important that he and his coadjutors should be retained, however gross their wickedness, and however stoutly they denied it. Any *proof* therefore, concerning *his* conduct was out of order! My brother I state sober facts—proveable facts. Mark, this revelation of hearts—this mode of *cleansing the church*. I think it likely that it is a fair specimen of the manner in which most of the churches will be

* All of these misrepresentations and false accusations must remain untouched, or I must tell the truth in respect to Archipus's course. Which ought to be done? Most certainly the TRUTH ought to be told, however trying to my feelings to tell it in respect to this conduct of his; and however cutting to him to hear it. He knows, as well as he knows that he has a soul, that these reports were in brief circulation respecting him before my fall: and that none gave them a greater currency, than Mrs. W.—his NOW FIRM SUPPORTER. In the name of truth then, how can he now come forward, and try to make the impression, that they were raised and circulated by us, because he was opposed to me? Can he die in peace, without taking this back?

cleansed previous to the Millenium! But where will the wheat be found? But to go on. Archippus unequivocally, denied, that he had made any such confession, or that he had done any thing *immoral*! There sat Mrs. W. and heard these flat denials from her brother. She was called upon to know if he had not made such a confession in her presence? She was silent. A sister who sat by her, and who had formerly heard her denounce Archippus in the strongest terms, said to her, "Sister, did you not tell me that he made such a confession to you and Mrs.——?" But Mrs. W. was silent. In astonishment, with earnestness, she again put the interrogation. In a *whisper*, Mrs. W. answered—"Yes"—but, said she, "I don't want to say any thing about it now!!" You see, dear brother, she was earnestly engaged with Archippus in *cleansing the church*: and in order to effect this, it was indispensable to retain a man that she has not only just before denounced, as being guilty of abominable conduct towards females, but concerning whom she said, "I have covered up, and covered up his cheating and conniving, until I have nothing left to cover up with!" It seems, however, she now had found something to cover up the conduct of her brother—he had turned too, to lend her a helping hand, when arraigned for her *own* misconduct. Do not once think that I am trifling.—No, God forbid. I am, as I before said, stating *proveable* facts. I know it is an awful thing that ever such a farce should be acted out, under the pretence of cleansing a church—but so it was: and I call upon you again, as we pass along, to notice the revelation of the thoughts of many hearts in connexion with these transactions. Well, the three cases were all dropped; and then up gets Archippus's right hand man, and made a motion to exclude six brethren at one sweep! Myself, with five others. You know the pretence for excluding me—but as for the other five, not a shadow of an accusation, was brought against them, only for causing divisions. This was urged by Archippus with all of his power. You remember, that I clearly proved, in a former communication that he, and his coadjutors were

the *guilty* authors of this division. He had taken a stand in opposition to the doctrine of *forgiveness*, commanded by God in his word:—and, because these brethren would not go with him, a division was the consequence—and now he comes forward and charges the guilt which belonged to *himself* and party, to them; on *this* charge urged their exclusion from the church! I said the motion was to exclude six at a time—for, observe; if they had taken *one* at a time, they could not have carried the vote: for although the female members were prohibited by them from voting, and although there appeared to be a small majority of *male* members, that in *some* things were with Archippus, yet when *this* work was brought forward of voting out these brethren, against whom, no accusation of any scriptural validity could be brought, some of them shrunk. They could not have the hardihood to go with him in this awful work. So it was necessary, in order to carry the vote to put up six at a time. You plainly see, that by such a course a minority of fifteen could vote down a majority of twenty. From this course of proceeding, however it is evident there was no *validity*, in their pretended votes of exclusion; even if there had been no other scriptural objection to it. But I will speak of their proceedings as Archippus and his party are wont to understand them, that their conduct may appear in its true light. Thus then, were these brethren excluded; and, in the course of the evening, six or seven more, who declared themselves with them. As to the *character* of these twelve brethren, (I leave out myself) I am not influenced by partiality, when I say, that they in *general* gave good evidence of deep devotion to God, and ardent piety. I was intimate with a number of them—saw their walk, from day to day, and I know not, that I have ever been acquainted with any men, who appeared more sincerely to desire to know the will of God and do it, than they. They were men of deep devotion to God if one may judge from the closest observation of their conduct and conversation. But they must be thrust out. This, according to Archippus's views, was *cleansing the church*: and he

boasted, (I understood,) that he had done the greatest work for God, that week and on that evening, that ever he did in the same length of time in his life! I agree with him, that there was great progress made that evening in cleansing the church:—but, I should probably differ from him on some other points of vast importance. Now, in respect to the character of his party, *I* will not undertake to decide: but if they were to be judged by their *own testimony* concerning each other, a short time previous to this *amalgamation*, it would appear in no enviable light—I mean that of many of them. This, will apply to Archippus and Mrs. W. as I have already shewn, but not more appropriately than to a number of the rest. For instance, he who on that memorable evening acted as *moderator*, had borne a strong testimony against the wickedness as he said of him who made the motion for exclusion; and vice versa. But as I told you, *my* sin, covered the whole! they were in union and harmony in opposing and excluding one who had *confessed* his sin and asked forgiveness; and they seemed to be in union and harmony in fellowshiping those, who according to their own testimony, had behaved very wickedly, but who positively refused to confess, and ask forgiveness. I pray you to remember this *sample* of church cleansing. I expect there will be much of it, before the church of God is delivered from Babylonish captivity.—Now Archippus and his party had the *credit*, with popular professors, of *really* cleansing the church! One of them said it made him think of the triumph of Mordecai over Hulan! But there was an *under current* here—through the whole of this, which you have not yet seen. In a communication which I intend to make you, on the power of selfish sectarianism, developed in circumstances connected with my fall, I shall give you a view of it. I forbear to remark in this place, on the course pursued by Archippus and his party in the *society meeting*, in order to secure the control of the meeting house. It was of a piece with all the rest.* And now my brother, I have said all which I

*See next page,

shall say respecting the dealings of the church, in my case. As I have already said the recital of many of these things, has been painful to me, in the extreme. I pray you to think as favorably as you can, of those persons who have erred in these transactions. Some of them I hope are the subjects of grace; but having adopted the doctrine of *expediency* for their creed, their practice has been what might have been expected from such a theory. And here I would remark that the doctrine of *expediency*, has not often had a more clear practical illustration, than in the conduct of Archippus and his party through the whole of these transactions. Behold its enormities, and where it has led him! I pity him, and would not have spoken of his faults, if I could have consistently avoided it. But one of two things must be done—either the truth of God must be trampled under foot, and a number, who have tried, I believe, with all their hearts to support it, lie under false imputations or the story must be told. And he of all men should be one of the last to complain—for if under pretence of helping the cause of truth he pursues the course which he has, certainly he cannot find fault, if to benefit the *same cause*, his own proceedings are exposed. As to the sentiments which I have advanced, I leave it to impartial persons to judge, whether they, or those advocated by Archippus, are most in accordance with the truth as it is revealed in the word of God. In my next, I intend to entertain you with a more agreeable subject. In the mean time I pray you once more, not to forget this specimen of *church cleansing*—for I apprehend

* The SOCIETY stood on a different ground from any other in the state which I know of, excepting one. The CHURCH, by the act of incorporation was made a body politic to hold property. Consequently EVERY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH, male and female, were members of the society. But what sort of membership is that of a society which has the control of property, if the member has no voice---no right to act! Yet this was the ground which was taken, and by it, the females were robbed of their property; I mean those who did not see fit to join hands with Archippus's party.

that a great shaking among the professed churches of God, is at the doors: when those who sit more by *meeting houses* and popular applause, than they do by the truth, as it in Jesus will be made manifest!

I remain most affectionately Yours,

RAY POTTER.

P. S. I have just heard a person say, that while in a Lawyer's office in this city, the person who made the motion to exclude the members alluded to, in the foregoing narrative, accompanied by a person, who, by the description, no doubt was Archippus, were consulting a Lawyer, as to what course they should pursue, in order to get the control of the meeting-house:—and the Lawyer advised them to *exclude a number of the other party*, as the only effectual method. So it comes out, that Archippus got his counsel for **CLEANSING THE CHURCH** from a lawyer!!!

R. P.

LETTER XII.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*,) OCT. 21st, 1837.

My dear Brother:—

I mentioned in my last, that in my next communication, I should direct your mind to a more agreeable subject. It is *truly*, more pleasing to dwell on the virtues of our fellow beings, than to depict their errors and sins. In my former communications, I have been obliged, in duty, to speak of my own great transgressions, and of *some* of the unholy conduct of those, who, I conceive, have as greatly sinned, in persecuting me, when smitten of God. But, however painful the recital has been, both to you and me—and I can truly say, it has filled me with sorrow—yet, a contemplation of it, in contrast with what I am now about to lay before you, will serve more clearly to exhibit the moral amiableness, of the spirit of that Jesus, who came into the world to *save sinners*; as acted out in the conduct of some of his followers, towards me, in my *deep distress*,

and *deep disgrace*. Before I speak, particularly, of the few in Pawtucket, who in relation to this affecting scene, I fully believe, have followed closely in the foot-steps of their divine master, I will call your attention to some other individuals residing at a distance; and who, I think, cannot with any plausibility, be accused of being moved by any selfish considerations to pursue the course of conduct towards me, which I am about to describe. When I was at brother Cornel's, soon after I left your house, and in the forlorn state, which I have already spoken of; and when, with the utmost propriety, I could say with the Psalmist, "I was a reproach among all of my enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance; they that did see me, fled from me—for I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side:" I say when in this distressed, forsaken, despised and persecuted state—having fled from my home to escape the violence of a mob: the following letter was brought to me, from Gerrit Smith, of Peterborough, New-York; which I have already adverted to, and which I promised to lay before you in its proper place. You know by reputation this man. His name, has long since sounded through the land, and I was about to say, through the world—as a kind of second Howard.—Now why was not this man afraid of losing *his* character, by sending such a letter to a poor sinner like me in the deepest disgrace? I will answer for you, by asking why the adorable Jesus was not afraid of losing *his* character in visiting a *world* of fallen, degraded sinners—ininitely more disgraced in *his* sight than I could possibly be in the sight of any finite being:—I say why was not *he* afraid of losing *his* character in visiting *such* a world? And after coming, receiving sinners and eating with them—taking into the arms of his fellowship and love, penitent *publicans* and *harlots*, and saying to the disgraced and despised thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."—Was Jesus afraid that the holy Angels would despise him, for such conduct as this? The *Pharisees* did despise him for it. *That*, was one of his worst offences, in *their* view—

that he kept company with those, who, in their estimation, were disgraced sinners. The *Pharisees* have acted out the same spirit, precisely, towards those who have visited, and shewn mercy to me, in my wretched state: but the *Angels* of God, adored Jesus, for visiting fallen and disgraced sinners, and I believe the same holy *Angels*, have gazed with infinite delight on the Christ-like conduct of Gerrit Smith, and others, for similar conduct towards me. Now my dear brother, if you wish to bring *old times* up in full view—the scenes which were acted by Jesus on the one hand, and the *Pharisees* on the other, in the days of his flesh—I say if you wish to have the conduct of Jesus, and the conduct of the *Pharisees*, brought up in *full view* before you, side by side—take this letter, and lay it by the side of the conduct of those ministers and professors, who since my fall have denied me mercy—been deaf to my cries of distress, and have done nothing, but to try to *aggravate my case*, and thus to sink me into despair—do this and you will have a portrait of both. Here it is. Mark every sentiment, every sentence, and every word; and tell me, if it does not look to you as if God *designed* it, for the *very purpose* of shewing the contrast alluded to.

PETERBORO' MARCH, 5, 1837.

Elder Ray Potter:

MY DEAR BROTHER.—You will perhaps say that you are not worthy to be called my brother. But I say that you are; and that the honest-hearted, full, and precious confession of your sin, makes me feel unworthy to be called your brother. Christ loves best, not him who has committed the fewest and least heinous sins, but him who has the most penitent heart. I do not write this letter to direct you to the never failing source of consolation. You are more familiar with it, than I am—and I doubt not that you are richly experiencing its comforting and healing power. I write to let you know that I pity and pray for you—and that I most tenderly sympathise with your dear wife and children and church, and the cause of humanity and religion, all of which your great sin has deeply wounded. I

write also to let you know that my love for you, is unabated. Indeed I can truly say, that I love you better than I loved you before I heard of your fall. Dear Charles Stewart who is with me, says that he too loves you more than he used to do. The deep repentance of your transgression has increased his confidence in your christian integrity. "Courage brother," said the good man who visited Dodd in prison, "God saw that nothing else would do for you." And so would I bid you take courage, and believe with all your heart, that God saw that nothing else but this deep fall would do for you. Perhaps you had one of my besetting sins, pride of character—love of the esteem of your fellow-men; and that the disgrace with which you have overwhelmed yourself, is the corrective and cure, which your Heavenly Father has provided for this sin.—Pray for me, my dear brother, that the like sin may be subdued at a less expense; but that at all events it may be subdued. I have often thought that God would leave me to perpetrate some enormous sin, utterly destructive to my character, before I should be relieved of my wicked solicitude, about my reputation, and the wicked pride which I take in it. His holy will be done. Knowing your poverty in this world's goods, and supposing that it may press peculiarly hard upon you now, I take the liberty of sending you the within check.* Our beloved brother, Charles Stewart, joins me in love to you, and your dear family.

Your friend,

GERRIT SMITH.

I wish you dear brother, to take this letter, and the directly opposite conduct which I have already laid before you—and instantly carry them in your mind and lay them *side by side*, before the judgment seat of Christ; with the authors of each infull view of HIM, who spake the parable recorded in the latter part of the 18th of Matthew. And can you doubt the result? As the words of Jesus shall judge us in the last day, and not one jot nor tittle of them shall pass away I will only in this place quote two passages—and O that all concerned, would make the application.—

“Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy.”—Matt. 5 C. 7 v. “For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath shewed no mercy; for mercy rejoiceth against judgment.”—James 2 C. 13. Dear brother—*public sentiment*, the criterion of most professor’s conduct towards me, will never, never change, invalidate nor nullify these truths of God. No: *that* may change thousands and millions of times, but these will remain the same when time shall be no more! O praise the Lord! This letter I fully believe will bear the test of that “great day for which all other days were made,” and will I trust live to be admired by all who admire the spirit of Jesus, long after its author, and the fallen and afflicted man to whom it was addressed, shall mingle their joys together in the New Jerusalem, before the throne of God! Beloved man of God! may the spirit of Jesus *ever* influence thee on earth, and glory crown thine earthly career! Nor would I forget in this place, that, “dear Charles Stewart,” breathed the same sentiments—and sent me the same consolation. It was *like him*:—the friend of sinners, the friend of the oppressed. In all of my wretchedness since my fall, but two or three ministers have ever visited me with similar language in their mouths, to that contained in this letter. Indeed, but a very few have ever dared to put their heads under the roof where I dwelt. Of this number I delight to speak of Henry C. Wright. He come to see me, and looked at me, with an expression that did not convey the idea, that he thought there were no *other* sinners in this fallen world, besides myself. His language was like that of Jesus—and he went into the pulpit on Sabbath, and dared to preach the whole truth in respect to the blessed doctrine of forgiveness.—His visit of mercy will long be remembered by me, with feelings of the deepest gratitude, and unfeigned thanks; as will that of a minister, by the name of Brown, from Pawcatuck, of this state. I might speak of a number of other individuals who have visited me from abroad, and manifested a similar spirit, and conduct, but have not room. Those which I have already laid before you, may

serve for an illustration: my great object being to contrast truth with error, and the spirit of the adorable Jesus, with the spirit of this world. I have never heard of but three presses, that have said a word to vindicate me from the unnumbered unholy assaults which were aimed for my destruction. There may have been more, but I never have seen them. Joseph A. Whitmarsh has dared to call me brother: and an Editor in Boston, by the name of Comstock, an *entire stranger* to me, has in a number of articles, taken a generous and manly stand, in respect to my case. I can only add to these a writer in the "Herald of Freedom," of Concord New Hampshire. All of my other old friends of the press, have found it expedient in relation to my case to be silent. We can, through great opposition, reprove sin, and after all, get honor by it—but to take by the hand a penitent publican, exposes one to the risk of being accused of fellowshipping iniquity—a risk, which but few have moral courage enough, to run. Some of the most popular religious (?) papers, joined an ungodly world, in sneering at me. I will here transcribe the article in the Herald of Freedom, in answer to one of them.

Mr. Editor.—We are charged with showing an "un-christian spirit." The N. H. Observer and its patrons and readers assure us of it. I point the readers of that paper to an article in the last number of it headed, "Pure Testimony," as a sample of their spirit, and ask them one and all if that spirit is what they want us to exhibit—if that is the "Christian spirit," they so much talk about? I call on them and their editor, to read that article over once, solemnly and conscientiously, and then answer whether the spirit of it is what they mean by "Christian spirit." If it is, I confess the abolitionists are in truth wanting in it, and I trust in Heaven, they may keep so.

Elder Ray Potter, a free will Baptist preacher, of Pawtucket, R. I. a man of original and most powerful mind, of great and striking talent as a writer, of eminent piety and philanthropy, and of hitherto *spotless* life,—committed one of the crimes, the least of them, of which David was guilty,

in the matter of Uriah. He confessed his sin to God—to the church—the people around him and the world. He laments it in language of the keenest distress, contrition and penitence. The editor of the N. H. Observer, heads a notice of his fault, with the words, "Pure Testimony." Elder Potter had published a periodical by that title. The first stone cast at the afflicted and penitent man, by the N. H. Observer, is the bitter and cruel taunt—"Pure Testimony." "It is impossible for me," says the heart broken penitent "to express my anguish. I only now say, that I humble myself before you as a church, and every individual. I confess my sin. Do with me as seemeth good in your sight. Let God's will be done. I must be overwhelmed in disgrace. I deserve it: I complain not, let what will come. *God will be glorified in my degradation. In that I have comfort.* Oh God, I submit to thy awful rebuke, *to let hell rejoice over me for a season.* I ask forgiveness of God—of you—of the people of this place—of all the world" It seems to me there is nothing on record, since the psalms of David, more indicative of profound, heart-broken, saving penitence than we have here. What more did David himself utter—what more could he utter, or feel. What more does our Father in Heaven ask of us, depraved, fallen creatures, by way of repentance and confession, than this. He that "is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity—who cannot look on sin, but with the greatest abhorrence." He is ever ready to pardon and absolve, on penitence and confession. Not so, "rejoicing hell."—Not so the wicked and adulterous world, who hunt the fallen man away from his home, ("he has fled," says the Observer,) and not so the editor of New Hampshire's religious periodical; who sneers at him in his abasement, and in his affliction and distress, and calls him a "thorough going abolitionist, and moral reformer, or anti-licentious man!"—He reminds him now that he "has published a periodical, to which he gave the title of *the Pure Testimony.*" This truly, is "Christian spirit." Slavery is a delicate subject; we must be cautious how we speak against it. Our south-

ern slave-holders are our "*brethren*,"—we must be *cautious* in speaking of their unfortunate situation. But our christian brother—who is an abolitionist, and moral reform man?—if he sin, and confess it before the church and world, may be sneered at and taunted, by the organ of New Hampshire christianity. That hell should rejoice over him, the poor man did expect. It is natural that hell should rejoice. But has it come to this, that professed christians are to join in the rejoicing, and swell the exultation? Are the patrons of the *Observer* ready to become the endorsers and encouragers of such rejoicing?

Straws show the way of the wind. Editors show the temper of their patrons. Let the patrons of the *Observer* read the article, and approve or disapprove it. It is in perfect keeping, with the whole course of the paper and its patrons, towards anti-slavery and the abolitionists. Ray Potter was an abolitionist. His fall therefore, is fair cause of rejoicing—and he a proper subject of cold-blooded insult and taunt. He is a moral reform man too, his misery, therefore is a legitimate subject of christian sport and sarcasm.—Shade of Mc Dowall!—what would have been his dying emotions—a martyr to the cause of purity, amid false brethren and a bloody-minded world—had he foreseen that espousing his just and Christ-like principles, would have made a man infamous, in the eyes of professing christians, and his humiliation for confessed sin, their jests and scorn!

This sneer at the fall of Potter, may win the *Observer* subscribers from the infidel world around him. It will gladden the tempers of pro-slavery professors, and the malignant mob. It will relieve the wicked to witness the fall of the abolitionists. God grant that they may have few such occasions of relief. Let anti-slavery men take heed to their walk, and watch and pray, humbling themselves in view of their own weakness and depravity, and the sins of their brethren, and see to it, that they give not the enemy, whether professor or profane, occasion to blaspheme.

AN ABOLITIONIST.

I know not who was the author of this communica-

tion. May he be richly rewarded for his labors of love, at the resurrection of the just. I cannot forbear in this place, to mention the christian and merciful conduct of Mrs. Sophia Little of Newport, towards me and my family, in the midst of all our distress. Although the daughter of one of the highest official characters in the state: yet, on my being driven away from home by the mob, she immediately came with her family, and commenced boarding with my wife;—which she continued to do, for a number of months: and by her pious sympathy, counsel and prayers, has afforded us unspeakable comfort. I know she shrinks from eulogy more than from persecution; yet, I cannot withhold this testimony to her unfeigned charity, and Christ-like humility. I shall give you a farther account of the christian kindness of some of God's dear people to me in my next. In the mean time join me in ascriptions of praise to God, that the benevolent and merciful spirit of Jesus, is yet to be found in the world.

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XIII.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison,*) OCT. 22D. 1837.

My dear Brother:—

How true it is that the most holy and benevolent of men, have in all ages, been contemned and set at nought by the self-righteous, the proud and the great.—Yes, the spotless son of God himself, met with no better fate. In life he was considered by the Pharisees, disreputable and mean, and *ended* his life between two thieves!—The holy Apostles were made as the *filth* of the world, and the offscouring of all flesh, (a remarkable expression,) and the disciples of Jesus since, who have been faithful to their Master, have not retained a better character, with the men of the world. To be sure there have been *professors* of religion, in all ages, who have been accounted honorable:—the Scribes and Pharisees and chief Priests were; but then

they slew the Lord of life and glory; and honorable professors now, treat the devoted children of God, not much better. For me to speak in terms of commendation, of those saints of God in Pawtucket, who since my fall have faced the frowns of earth and hell, in maintaining the doctrine of Christ in their conduct towards me, would, no doubt, be met with *almost* as great a sneer, as a commendation of Christ and the Apostles would have met with, from the tall professors—the Scribes and Pharisees of that age. But Jesus has declared, that they who are ashamed of him and *his words*, of them will he be ashamed before his FATHER, and the holy Angels. Let those who have despised them and are ashamed of them, for keeping the words of Jesus, remember that worldly honor here, will be poor compensation for the holy contempt of Jesus, in the awful day of retribution. I feel as if I should be recreant to my duty, if I did not in this narrative, commend their course. I have already informed you of the stand which they first took, in opposition to the doctrine and conduct of Archippus. You can have no conception of what they had to endure. I have never known any thing in the present age, that has equalled it. The great body of professors, were down upon them, with their whole influence. This was all that open revilers wanted. They could hardly be seen in the streets, without being loaded with the most opprobrious epithets. Their friends and relatives forsook them. They were counted as moral nuisances—the dregs of society—and were made a bye-word and reproach among all the people. Business patronage was withdrawn from them.—Their houses were mobbed and they were threatened with imprisonment in the bridewell, for praying to God! And what was all this for? Why, for shewing mercy according to the example of Jesus; and the commands of God. For doing this, they were constantly accused of upholding me in my sin! Their enemies constantly cast this in their teeth. In vain did they declare that they condemned my sin, and meant to obey the commands of God, in shewing mercy to an imploring sinner. No arguments could be

heard from them, with candor and impartiality. The females were branded as befriending me from the vilest of motives, and those who opened their doors, to give me and my family a shelter from suffering, were accused of keeping a house of ill fame! The females were sometimes followed in the streets for half a mile, by a most vulgar gang, pouring out upon them a volley of the most obscene epithets. But, amidst the whole of it, they remained firm, trusting in God. I was in a situation to observe the daily conduct of many of them; and those too, who were considered the *worst of the set*. Never did I witness more apparent devotion to God. Their chief and great concern seemed constantly to be, What will God have us to do? Hours upon hours, have I known them to spend in most earnest prayer and supplication, to know his will and to obtain strength to do their duty. O that I could do them good! A reflection of what they have suffered for shewing me mercy, overwhelms me. But they shall have their reward. The eye of HIM, who sees in secret has been upon them, and he has marked their labors of love. A time is fast approaching, when the true characters of all men will appear—and then do I believe in God, these despised ones, will shine like the brightness of the firmament, and like the stars for ever and ever. O glorious thought that there is such a day rolling on! How little have their persecutors reflected that they have been trampling the image of Jesus under their feet, in the slander and abuse which they have poured upon these dear saints of God. I cannot forbear in this place to pay a tribute of gratitude to my dear afflicted wife. Her conduct towards me has been beyond all praise. If true she has granted me a full and free forgiveness; nor has taunting word ever fallen from her lips, to deepen my distress. The conduct of all my family has been merciful and kind towards me: and so with my relatives in general I cannot be restrained in this place of speaking of the conduct of the one towards me, who fell with me in transgression. I hesitate not to say that it has been that which true religion dictates. I believe her to *possess* that religion—

know that she has sinned: but I believe God has shewn her mercy, and owns her for his child. O that I could make her restitution for the injury I have done her—and to do something of this kind, shall be one great concern of my future life. Dear brother: when I think of the forgiving mercy shown me by many of God's dear children in the days of my wretchedness and wo, my heart is ready to burst with melting gratitude. It humbles me in the dust. You can hardly conceive what longings of soul I have; to make them some returns for their unmingled kindness to me in my distress. But I cannot enumerate all of these acts of mercy, or bring the actors into view. My limits will not permit me. I have shewn you enough for a constant. If you do not clearly perceive who has acted the most like Jesus, they who have with scorn turned away from me in my distress and disgrace, or those to whom I have alluded in my last communications, I am greatly mistaken in respect to your moral perception. I am now confined in a solitary prison. God is with me here. Never have I enjoyed myself much better. Although I have sinned, yet it is not for my sin that I am here. Of this I am well satisfied. This is only a pretence. The land abounds with adulterers, and yet my offence is the only one that was ever indicted;* and yet I believe I am the only one, who has ever made a public confession. I said, before, my sin affords them a *pretence* for all manner of persecution. But I have done. I shall dwell no longer in narrating my trials nor the conduct of those who are the means of them; any further than I am obliged to do, in the inferences which I intend to make, in some further communications which I shall make you, if the Lord permit, soon—and I beg you to remember, that to elicit truth in respect to the present state of the professed people of God, is the great object which I have in view through the whole. Some who have greatly afflicted me, have, I trust, been converted to God—

* There has been a black man indicted, and perhaps others, but I never have heard of any others.

and it is my my most fervent prayer, that they may see their errors, and turn from them, that peace and joy divine, may fill their hearts, and that I may rest with them finally in heaven!

I remain most affectionately Yours,
RAY POTTER.

LETTER XIV.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison,*) OCT. 23D, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

I now proceed to make some reflections on my fall, and the transactions which has grown out of it.—In respect to the effect which it has had on my own soul, I have given you some hints already; and shall say something farther before I terminate these communications. I will *commence* these reflections by calling your attention to the affecting evidence which we here have of THE FALLIBILITY OF MAN. This, is a lesson which mankind are slow to learn:—indeed, it is the very *last*, which they ever will learn thoroughly. If they *partially* learn it they seem strangely inclined, soon to forget it. Even the people of God, after having been humbled in view of their moral depravity and entire insufficiency, even to think a good thought, independently of the efficient agency of the Holy Spirit, will, after all, keep *trying* to believe that it is not *altogether* so. How few there are, in this fallen world, that do really see things as they are in this respect, and *look upon man to be BUT man*. But few my dear brother. I tell you again, this is the *last* lesson that we ever thoroughly learn. Thousands grow grey in studying it, and die in total ignorance of it after all. I know that multitudes *profess* to be very orthodox on this subject. They write volumes on it. They preach upon it. They talk of it in their conference meetings, and make a great ado about it, in their conversations one with another:—in telling how vile they see themselves to be, &c. But after all, we have

reason to believe, that but few realize hardly any thing which they say. Now, it is certain, that if a person see the *truth* in respect to this subject, he will cease to make that distinction *between sinners*, which is almost universally made—I mean between those who have committed such *overt acts* of sin, as disgrace them in the view of *man*, and those whose external conduct has been, what the world terms fair. The truth is, the hearts of all men, in what we term a state of nature, are *essentially* alike; yet, you know, there is a great difference in respect to the *breakings out* of depravity. Some break out in various overt acts, disgraceful to them while others do not; and yet have no more holiness in the sight of God, than those who *have* degraded themselves. Yet, this, I say, is hardly believed at all. Multitudes profess to believe it, but they do not.—They make sin and righteousness, almost wholly to consist in *external* actions:—forgetting that the whole in the sight of God, depends on the state of the *heart*. From hence, if a man pursue a course of conduct through life, free from those *external* aberrations, which are, by *men*, considered disgraceful, he is considered in a different light, from what as a *mere man*, he ought to be considered. There is a kind of *infallibility* attached to him. This is evident from the fact, that when one who has gained such a character does fall into some *external* act, that is by *man* considered a sin, the general cry is by many, “It can’t be that he has done thus and so.” And why this great wonder? The reason is plain. They do not believe that man is *but* man. Now the fact is, that some men are so *constituted*, that a course of *external* conduct, to meet the views of *man* in respect to righteousness, is far easier than it is for others:—that is, their *natural make*, to use as plain an expression as I can, prompts them to it. I believe this to be true, in respect to myself. I shall throw away “*voluntary humility*”—and all *affectation*, in speaking on this subject. For, as I do not *feel* like *boasting* of it, so also, I know it would be of *no use* to me to do so, *now*, if I were ever so much disposed:—and I therefore speak of myself *just as I think*; in

order to shew, that man, after all he may think of himself, is but man. The Phrenologist's account of my natural disposition, was strikingly correct;* and none have been deceived in considering me to possess those traits of character which I appeared to possess, and which I had the reputation of possessing. Added to this, I was a christian. I shall not *pretend* to doubt of this in order to answer the views and notions of many: i. e. that it is *essential* to the character of a christian, for him to doubt that he is one. I speak of that, of which I have been fully assured. But then what of all that? *There is not a man in the world nor ever was, but what may be so assailed with temptation as to be overcome, UNLESS PRESERVED BY THE EFFICIENT AGENCY OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD.* O that men would learn this lesson and fully believe it. But they will not. Garrison, a man *greatly beloved by me*, thus expresses himself in lamenting my fall—"him whom we had hitherto regarded as among the most worthy followers of Christ; whose zeal and boldness for the truth, and in every good work, have made him conspicuous all over the country, and endeared him to the hearts of thousands of the advocates of righteousness; *and who seemed to be storm proof against every temptation, and under every trial.*" Ah my brother—*here* is the great error. This, having man, any man, appear to us "*storm proof against temptation.*"—Who may be looked upon as "*storm proof against temptation,*" if Adam might not have been in his primeval state? a perfect man most certainly—just from the hand of his

* I wish to be understood, as not giving any opinion in respect to the correctness or incorrectness of the science of Phrenology. All I can say is, I have a consciousness, that Mr. Fowler was **GENERALLY** correct in his description of my natural disposition. This I do not do to **EXALT** myself; for I have again and again contended that there is not one particle of **HOLINESS** in the whole of it:—but I do it for the purpose of shewing the **FALLIBILITY** of **UNSANCTIFIED HUMAN NATURE**; and if we are not kept by the power of God temptations may be so adapted as to overcome **ANY** man.

creator, and yet he fell on the presentation of the first temptation! With this before us, why should we ever look upon any man as "storm proof against every temptation?" Is it likely that any of Adam's posterity—if God sees fit not to restrain them, will be more likely to withstand temptation than he? Yet with this lesson before us, and its often similar repetition ever since, we will still look upon *man*, as I before said, to be something *more* than man. Men do not see the *invisible* hand, that holds them. It will be said, they should watch and pray against temptation. Most certainly they ought; but then man is such a creature that he will not *watch* and *pray* if left to himself: and that, God does sometimes leave men,—yes, his own children to themselves; (I use a common phrase for the sake of being understood,) I say that he does sometimes thus leave even his own children to themselves, stubborn facts, place beyond all controversy as in the case of Peter and others. If they sin and fall, their *sin*—the *guilt* and *shame* of it, is all their own:—but if they stand, it is the *invisible hand of God alone that keeps them*. In illustration of this subject, I will state a strong case. If it were not for the preserving hand and power of God, William Lloyd Garrison might be tempted and induced to become a slave-holder! O that my former friends and especially those who professed to admire my zeal and steadfastness in the cause of truth and righteousness, would make a right improvement of my fall: and be led to a consideration of their *own* fallibility. If they *were* to make this use of it, they would no longer be *ashamed* to call me brother, notwithstanding my dreadful fall.—Look at Gerrit Smith and Charles Stewart. "Indeed," (he says,) "I can truly say, that I love you better than I loved you before your fall. Dear Charles Stewart who is with me, says that he too loves you more than he used to do." What strange language is *this*, to almost all the world? and yet, if you wish to find the *very same* in import, read the account of the reception of the returning prodigal: and if you wish also to see a specimen of the spirit that generally prevails towards me, look at the elder brother,

and hear what he says. I suppose it would be no more astonishing to many for William L. Garrison to become a slave-holder than it was to hear of my fall. Well, let them learn wisdom by this awful lesson, and not only *talk* about their moral weakness, while they are under the influence of a self-righteous spirit, but let them *feel*,—be conscious and *realize* what they are. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall—” and surely, the fairest way that they can be in *to* fall, is to feel in the least exalted over those who *have* fallen; and refuse them forgiveness and fellowship when they cry for mercy! In my dreadful fall, God has given a most solemn lesson on the moral depravity and weakness of man; yet how few appear to be making the use of it which they should? Instead of being humbled, multitudes make an occasion of it, of exalting themselves, and increasing their Pharisaical self-righteousness. They must sooner or later *come down*. If they do not humble *themselves*, God will bring them down—and it may be into the depths of hell to rise no more! One thing my dear brother, we may sit down as an unalterable truth; *a self-righteous, self-depending spirit, will never go into heaven*. No, not the least particle of it. What would be its appearance in heaven? More loathsome than a serpent in your parlor: infinitely more so. What would it *do* in heaven if it *could* go there? It would clip the crown of the great Redeemer, and take away the glory of the gospel: from hence, no marvel that Jesus has said, that Publicans and Harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, before the self-righteous Pharisees. Praised be the glorious savior of sinners, that I trust this spirit, that formerly prevailed in my heart to such a great extent, has been greatly subdued by my fall. While writing here in this loathsome prison, my mind goes back to the seasons—yes, the *many* seasons of crying to God, that he would make me more like Jesus Christ, let it cost me what it would in this world. Dear brother, I feel as if it was done! Yes, I feel *assured* that it is done. But O, how strangely has it been brought about! I have sometimes thought, that a more dreadful

battle was never fought between native conscientiousness and the fear of doing wrong on the one hand, and passion on the other, than in my case. If I were to state all the circumstances connected with it, some things would be perfectly astonishing to all who gave credit to them: but in general, no doubt would be disbelieved. But my fall was my rise—my destruction my salvation! Strange talk to most people, but really true. Men will talk of *reason* in such a case:—but leave that, my dear brother, for those who have no *right* reason. Reason against appetite—unassisted by efficient grace! We might just as well talk of a feather's floating against a hurricane! Is it not strange, that after so many demonstrations to the contrary, that any person will say a word about reason's governing appetite? Behold thousands and thousands of the most powerful intellects that God ever made in this world, led captive by appetite for ardent spirits. I once heard a most affecting story in illustration of this. A man had become intemperate. He dreamed one night, that an angel came to him, and presented to him two cups—one full of rum, and the other full of blood, and told him that if he drank the blood he should have everlasting life; but, if he drank the rum, he should be forever miserable: and yet, in full view of this, he seized the cup of rum, and drank it down. The dream had a great effect upon him. He left off drinking for some time. One day, however, he rose deliberately from his bench, (being a shoe-maker,) went and bought a quart of rum, and drank himself drunk; and remained a drunkard! Lord what is man! Here we have a specimen of reason's governing appetite. But it will be said, if they were to begin *timely* to resist, they would not fall. Ah my brother, this if is a very important word. This may be true. But it is just *as* true that there is a *way* for every temptation to get hold and prevail, unless *God preserves us*. Look at David. There is a remarkable expression, concerning David; which is not used in respect to any other saint, spoken of in the bible. He is called a man after God's own heart:—and yet, after all of his visions of God and

glory—his deep acquaintance with the law of God, that not only condemned external acts of sin, but wicked thoughts; at the age of about sixty as is supposed, he fell into the sins of adultery and murder! Tell this to some, and they will begin to talk of that's being a dark age! Do they mean by this, that David was in the dark, in respect to the law of God that said, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill? I say do they mean this? when perhaps no man that ever lived before or since, had clearer views of the law of God than he? Why then do they take his Psalms for texts to preach from, in this age of light!—But you know this is consummate folly. In David's fall we see what man is, and O that the *children* of men, after so many demonstrations as we find strewed all through the Bible, and as we find all around us now, would leave off *feeling* as Peter did, (if they do not say as he did,) "though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." Be that as it may, none will ever enter heaven, but those who learn and feel their *own* weakness, and are prepared to ascribe all their salvation to the Lamb of God. God grant that my dreadful fall may be rightly improved by others, in sinking them into the dust in view of their own state, and dependence upon God!

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XV.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison*,) OCT. 24TH. 1837.

My dear Brother :—

My dreadful fall has put me in a place of *observation*, which I never was in before; and, indeed in which I could *not* have been, in any other situation. While lying here, with broken bones, bleeding and mangled, and trodden under the feet of men, truths of vast importance have been presented to my mind, in respect to the state of the world, and especially in respect to the *professed christian* world,—some of which I had hardly ever glanced at before,

and others, although I had thought of them, yet hitherto had comparatively seen them but dimly. The next thing which I shall advert to, in the course of these reflections, is, the rule by which most of the present generation—even ministers and professors, judge of sin. That rule is **PUBLIC SENTIMENT**, instead of the law of God! Never did I have so clear a view of this, as I have had since my fall. I know if you were to ask the generality of them, by what rule they try actions, they would unhesitatingly answer, the *law of God*. This would be their “say so”—this is their theory: but what is their practice? Why they practically substitute public opinion for the law of God.—Dear brother, as awful as this is—as directly as it aims at the throne of the Most High—as truly as it tramples under foot the divine law, it is almost *universal* with professor and profane through this land. The question is not, what does God in his word say—but what do the people think and say; or, in other words, which way is the current of public sentiment sitting:—and when it is found which way that runs, they launch ship, and down stream they go, with surprising velocity! Now if I have never told the truth before, I tell it now. I cannot express to you how clearly, how indubitably this has been demonstrated in respect to my case. I will give a specimen for an illustration. When I first went before the church of which I had been pastor, made my confession, and on my knees implored their forgiveness, they voted to forgive me. But, a day or two after, a certain minister, signified to one of the brethren, his entire disapprobation of their course, and that if the church held me in fellowship, the church over which he presided, would have no fellowship for *them*. Now mark; this same minister, had to my certain knowledge, not a long time before this, been labored with—been argued with for a long time, on the impropriety of the churches of his denomination at the *north*, holding fellowship with the churches of the same denomination at the *south*, who are baptized with slavery; that unhesitatingly nullifies the marriage covenant, tramples under foot the seventh commandment, and un-

blashingly tolerates adultery and licentiousness in its worst forms—and *he opposed the idea of breaking fellowship with them*. Nor has *he* ever in his denominational capacity done it; and to-day if there were to be a national convention of the whole denomination from the North and South, in a slave-holding state, as there was not a long time since, in Richmond Virginia, he would, no doubt, if called upon, attend; sit in counsel with them in *full fellowship*. Now no doubt his argument would be for not fellowshiping the church that fellowshiped me, that I was impenitent &c.—Well, for *argument's sake*, grant this to be true—and that I am still an adulterer:—and what then? Is it not passing strange, that a man should be so panic struck at the thoughts of fellowshiping a church that retains *one* adulterer in it, when he holds on upon churches with all his might, who hold to *legalizing* this sin? and retain it in thousands of instances unrepented of, unconfessed and unforsaken? How do you *reconcile* this conduct, if this man meant to make the law of God his rule of conduct? Is not here as complete a dilemma as we found Mr. Archippus in, not a long time since? Surely; and by one horn or the other he *must* hang. What does such a course of conduct say? Why that adultery in a black man is not sinful, while it is so in a white man. And why so? Does the law of God say so? No! but *public sentiment does!* Why then, public sentiment is substituted as the rule of conduct for ministers and churches instead of the word of God. I give this as a *specimen* but you may depend upon it, the infection is *almost universal*. Since my fall, notwithstanding I prostrated myself in my confession before *all flesh*, and begged for mercy, yet ministers and professors in general, manifested as much dread of coming near me, much more of calling me brother, as most people would, of coming near a cholera patient—yet these same persons, would hold in their embrace and treat with all possible christian courtsey, slave-holders. It was not long before my fall, that a certain D. D. came from Charlestown, preached in one of the most popular meeting-houses in this city, who

but a short time before he left home, sold a human being for about one thousand dollars! and so far from being ashamed of it—repenting of it, and forsaking it, was ready to proclaim the abominable deed upon the house top, and stand up in its justification—and this man could have the courtesy of the christian community from the college downwards, while I am spurned from their feet with the utmost disgust. My dear brother—if I were to tell these things *aloud*, what conclusive evidence it would be, in the minds of all these persons, of my impenitence! I only uttered a few sentences of truth, similar to this, in my address to the people of Pawtucket, and they wanted no more to prove that I had not repented of my sin. But it is the *everlasting truth*, that public sentiment is generally substituted as the rule to judge of sin, instead of the law of God. From the depths of my degradation, I proclaim it. O what an insult to the ever blessed God! It is virtually wresting the government out of his hands, and putting it into the hands of a corrupt sinful world. But glory to his name, he *reigns*: and will reign to the final utter confusion of those who thus presumptuously and blasphemously interfere with his divine prerogative. And here I must go *straight*: for if I seek to please men, I cease to be the servant of Christ—and if I am a respecter of persons, I shall sin against God. It is a truth, that cannot be denied, that in respect to my case the great contemners of the doctrine of selfish expediency in respect to another subject, and of substituting public sentiment, as the test of moral actions, instead of the law of God, have themselves generally fallen into a dilemma. It is a command as clearly revealed in the bible, to forgive and fellowship a brother, that turns and *says he repents* as any other whatever. It is as *clearly* revealed, most certainly, as it is that we are bound to let the oppressed go free. It is as clearly revealed, as is that great and fundamental law of God, on which the Anti-Slavery advocates have built their doctrine; and which they have urged with such irresistible power, in overthrowing all the arguments which their opponents could bring—viz: as ye would that others

should do unto you, even so shall ye do unto them. Well, when the pro-slavery men, come forward with their expediency arguments, how soon do they fall before the resistless power of truth urged by abolitionists. They reign them up to the testimony of God in his word; and give not the least countenance to their arguments from selfish expediency. And "thus saith the Lord," they contend is the great rule of action:—and to this they say we must bow and submit in all of our conduct. When the pro-slavery man attempts to fly away, and talk about loss and gain, in emancipating slaves, how soon the abolitionist overthrows him, by appealing to the word of God, and from *thence* reading to him his duty. When the negro despiser, filled with prejudice against color, undertakes to vindicate his conduct in degrading a man, because he is of a different complexion, how soon does the abolitionist bring him down from his pinnacle of pride and vain glory, by quoting to to him, "That God hath made of one blood all nations of men," and that HE is no respecter of persons. And how glorious this is! Nothing has been able to stand before them. They have swept the field in this great conflict on the subject of slavery; and the public sentiment men, and the expediency men, have been made to quail before them, and hide their heads for shame. But suppose a pro-slavery man should happen to ask them this question: "Why do you stand aloof from your old brother and friend, and refuse him the hand of fellowship? Answer. He has greatly sinned and fallen into *disgrace*. But has he not also publicly confessed his sin—turned to you and said he repented? and does not God in his word command you most clearly to forgive him and fellowship him. Though his sins were as *crimson*, are you not bound to do it? Are you not taught this in the parable of the prodigal son, as well as by the plain commands of God, which none can misunderstand. If he has been *ever so wicked*, yet does not God declare that in the day he turns from his wickedness, HE freely forgives him, and that his sins shall not any more be *mentioned* to him? Now do you not tell us

to go by the word of God in respect to the subject of slavery, and if we say a word about *expediency*, you give us no quarters, but tell us plainly that we are fighting against God? and are you not walking by the *same rule* that you so unqualifiedly condemn in us? Be honest and own the truth. You now stand aloof from *him*, on the same principle that I do not associate, on equal terms with a black man—*because you are ashamed!* And for the same reason that I am opposed to the abolition of slavery: *because you think you should lose something by it!* *Public sentiment*, is against the man; crushing him:—and you dare not face that public sentiment, and reach forth the helping hand to help him, for fear of *disgrace*. Now “thou art inexcusable O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, **DOEST THE SAME THINGS.**” My dear brother, how could multitudes of prominent abolitionists meet this argument of this pro slavery man? I am obliged to say they could not—and if they would be candid, they would ingenuously confess it. Where are the many, very many that used to visit me—were as hospitably received as our hearts and home could make them—with whom I labored most sincerely, and to whose help I flew with all my might, when they were overwhelmed in disgrace and suffering? Where have they been since I have laid bleeding, down-trodden, mobbed, and thrown into prison? I say where are they, and echo answers, where? A few have manifested a similar spirit with that of Gerrit smith. My soul is humbled in view of their merciful conduct towards me.* But the most keep away! But Jesus did not keep away, glory be to his dear name—nor will he keep away from the degraded black man, though the proud *white* man keeps away forever! It seems to me, that I hear God saying

* George W. Benson, Wyllys Ames, William Chace, William Adams, Abner Belcher, Henry C. Wright, Thomas Truesdell, Henry B. Stanton; Lewis Tappan, Oliver Johnson, James G. Birney, Charles Simmons and some others.

in this dispensation, to these great champions of truth, in respect to slavery; 'Come, I will try you on another ground, and see if you will carry your doctrine clear out. I will leave one of your number to fall into deep disgrace, and I will see whether you will stick to my word, in your conduct towards him then.' They were tried: and they turned away from the word of God, and became *expediency men*! This was too much—to follow Jesus *here* was more than they could endure. Glorious Jesus! thou didst *never* flinch: but in all thy conduct in respect to all subjects, thou didst trample under foot that heinous doctrine of selfish expediency; although, by so doing, thou didst lose thy character among the Pharisees, and finally lost thy life! O my dear brother, how few there are who will follow Jesus in all things! But I forbear.

I remain most affectionately Yours,
RAY POTTER.

LETTER XVI.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*,) OCT. 24TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

The most affecting exhibition, which has been presented to my own mind, in connexion with my dreadful fall, is, the views which generally prevail among the professed people of God, in respect to the *gospel of Christ*. I mean, as this has been demonstrated in their *practice*. What is the gospel? Is it not good news to sinners? And why? Because it saves them. Because, in the gospel, provision is made for the forgiveness of their sins; through the atoning blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, observe the following statement:—The greatest and vilest of sinners—though their sins are as crimson and scarlet—that come to God through Christ, are fully, freely, and everlastingly forgiven of all their sins; and stand as completely justified before God as if they never had sinned; as completely justified, and free from condemnation as the holy Angels, who have never sinned against God. This,

if I may so speak, is the very corner stone of the whole gospel system. The very doctrine that was prefigured by the sacrifices under the law dispensation—the glorious doctrine preached by our blessed Lord, in the days of his flesh—constantly insisted upon by the apostles after his crucifixion, and was the fundamental doctrine, on which Luther stood when he levelled the artillery of God's truth at the Romish doctrine of penance and purgatory. Now my dear brother, you can but see, that in the conduct of most ministers and professors in respect to my case, this great and glorious doctrine of full, complete and everlasting forgiveness, has been virtually thrown away; and the popish doctrine of doing penance substituted in its stead—*they could not endure the gospel doctrine of forgiveness*. It is the last thing which the human heart will consent to, to submit to be saved in the way the gospel proposes—for, opposition to the gospel is always exactly *commensurate* with our self-righteousness. They run exactly parallel; and I have already considered how self-righteousness clings to the human heart. From hence we are ashamed of the gospel of Christ—the *real* gospel. And that too, when they all the while profess to believe in it, preach in it, and hope to be saved by it. This was most clearly demonstrated in my case. Covered as I was with deep disgrace—although they could not deny but what the great atonement was *sufficient* for the full forgiveness of my sins—nor, could they deny but what God had a *right* to forgive me—nor, that he had *not* forgiven me—nor, that if he was pleased to take me out of the world, I should not go to heaven—yet, after all, they were *ashamed* to fellowship me. This, my brother was the whole of it—they were *ashamed*—and consequently ashamed of the *real* gospel. You will remember that the first stand taken, was not, that I was *not* a christian, nor that I was impenitent:—but though I were a christian, and though I were penitent, and though God had forgiven me, yet for the good of the *cause*—to save the *church* and to save *me*, it was necessary for me to be cast out—or excluded from the fellowship of the people of God:—and this

stand I believe was almost universally taken. And why was it necessary for me to be cast out of the fellowship of God's people? I have already told you:—they were *ashamed* to meet the sneers of the world in retaining me. But the gospel was sufficient to save me—consequently they were ashamed to go heart and hand with the gospel: practically renounced it, and laid hold of the selfish doctrine of *doing penance*. The minister who now preaches where I formerly did, was asked what he thought about receiving me into fellowship, but a few days since; and he, unhesitatingly answered that he was established in the opinion, that in such cases, the person ought not to be received into fellowship under from four to eight years! My dear brother—in all soberness I consider this *awful heresy*—it is in effect, *denying the Lord who has bought us*. Now what argument can be used to support this awful doctrine? Will it be said that so much time is required in order to get evidence of his penitence? I answer that the whole bible is against such a position: and not one single passage of scripture ever has been or ever can be quoted to support it. Will it be said that it would be dishonorable to the cause of religion sooner to receive him? I answer that is nothing less than indirectly impeaching the holy God with dishonoring himself in saving the chief of sinners, in the way which he is pleased to save them—which is the very quintessence of Phariseism, as urged by them against the doctrine and conduct of our Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh. Let us state a case. Take the thief on the cross. The very same arguments which are used against receiving me into fellowship, might be urged against *his* having been received into heaven. There he was in the deepest disgrace:—even dying an ignominious death:—and the argument which is used in respect to my case when applied to him would run thus:—If Jesus receives *that* man into heaven, the world will say that he cloaks iniquity—countenances sin. For he has been a *noted* sinner—is most deeply *disgraced*, and besides all that, only think; he is dying in the most ignominious manner for his crimes.—

If Jesus grants *him* fellowship, the *people* will all say, that he fellowships iniquity—and the *world* will have no reverence for his character. This, is the argument exactly—it is as good in the one case as the other:—and at best, it strikes at the very vitals of the gospel; and introduces in its stead the doctrine of doing *penance* for salvation.—And yet these people are alarming the nation for fear the Catholics will overrun the country! My brother, some of their essential *doctrines*, against which Luther fought so nobly, have *already* overrun the country, under the sanction too of their professed opponents; the Protestants! O how little did I realize that such a state of things prevailed before my fall:—but when I come to be looked upon as a *sinner*, then did I find that “*Ichabod*” was engraven upon the temple walls of the churches of this region—the glory of the *pure gospel* having departed:—and that the Pharisees guarded the avenues, with drawn swords to thrust through and through every penitent publican who dared approach; unless he would first retire and do penance from four to eight years! Was Jesus afraid of being accused of fellowshipping iniquity in receiving to the arms of *his* fellowship, those who were considered by the self-righteous Pharisees the *greatest* of sinners? He *was* thus accused:—but did it move him? No! blessed be his dear name—for it was among his last words to comfort one of these disgraced sinners by giving him the glorious assurance;—“This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”—My dear brother; what horrible doctrine this is on which we are animadverting? It makes me shudder when I think of it. It does nothing less by *inference* than to impeach the holy and ever blessed God with dishonoring himself by appearing to fellowship iniquity in saving sinners. Now the bible is full of promises to the vilest of sinners that will repent; that they shall at the very moment they do so, be received into the favor and fellowship of God. Though they have been as wicked as Manassah, they shall thus be received. Though they have committed adultery and murder like David, they shall thus be received. Though they

have been as vile as the penitent publican and prodigal, they shall thus be received—but now, the great professed advocates of this same gospel, contend, that a sinner who is very much disgraced in the *view of men*, must not be received into the church short of doing penance “from four to eight years!” I ask you what is this but saying that if *they do as God does they*? I dishonor his cause and themselves as his professed disciples! and give an occasion for the world to say that they fellowship iniquity? In view of this doctrine what a great occasion was given in God’s putting away David’s sin, for the enemies of religion to say that he *countenanced* his sin? and especially what great occasion is given for such an accusation in the parable of the prodigal son? But the inferences are too horrible and blasphemous even to mention. If the result of their doctrine does not *throw away the whole gospel*, I know nothing about an argument. Will it be said that Christ *knew* that those whom he received were penitent; but we do not; therefore it is necessary for them to stand a long time on probation? I answer—that is not the point at all. The difficulty is not whether they are penitent or not—but what will the *world* think? Remember the ground first taken by Archippus. Again; how long does it take these persons to be satisfied that a man is penitent, that they *wish* to get into the church on account of his worldly honor or worldly good? Why, the different sects will *quarrel* who shall have him:—and, while the man has hardly any evidence at all, to his own soul, that he is a christian, they will incessantly tease him to *join the church*: And ministers and people will give him the utmost encouragement, that he is a christian and need not doubt, and warn him *not to wait!* Many such instances I think are occurring—when at the same time if a poor disgraced sinner, (I mean in view of the world) come to them and asks an admittance into the church—though he prostrates himself before them in the dust—they will frown him from them and tell him that he must do penance from “four to eight years” before he can be received; they wish to be certain of his penitence!

Is it difficult for you to see the *reason* why they can get an evidence of penitence so much sooner in one case than in the other? Because, in the one case there is profit and worldly honor; but, in the other they are obliged to act on *gospel principles* and run the risk of faring as Jesus did in receiving sinners and eating with them. Do you think dear brother, that I wish for an admission into these Churches, makes me thus write? No, I know you do not. In view of my final account, I declare I would not enter the most popular of them in Christendom, while they are under the influence of *such* views and practices if they would unanimously receive me. No, God forbid. You now understand clearly what I meant in my address to the people of Pawtucket by the *whole gospel's* being thrown away in dealing with me. This I showed you clearly to be demonstrated in the stand taken by Archippus at the onset; and I trust that the foregoing remarks serve farther to confirm the statement. O that God would raise up men to preach *the Gospel of Christ*. My dear brother, try as far as you can in public and private to expose this system of the *Ancient Pharisees*, that under the garb of the gospel of God is laying hold of penitent publicans with a death grasp, does all it can to plunge them into dark despair; while it holds out a pretended sceptre of mercy to the self righteous honorable of this world and thus deceives them! O Blessed Jesus, how lovely dost thou appear?—more lovely to me if possible, than ever—thou friend of publicans and sinners! This Pharisaical doctrine not only withholds mercy from poor sinners, but it makes war with the government of God. Now by the death of Jesus an infinite atonement has been made for sin, and God can now be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.—Through this atonement he can now receive the very chief of sinners who repents, to himself!—yea, to dwell with HIM in the New-Jerusalem: but according to this doctrine God has not a *right* thus to freely forgive the vilest of sinners:—for, if they admit that *God* has this right, how can they get clear of the conclusion that they are bound to do the

same? and if they admit that the glorious God thus gives fellowship to the chief of sinners, how can they get clear of the inference that they are bound to do the same. Says the Apostle on this subject—"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died—but this doctrine condemns those whom God justifieth and thus virtually *throws away* the blood of Christ that was shed for the forgiveness of their sins!!! Now it is evident that the principal cause leading to such defective views of the *gospel* is to be found in the erroneous, meagre and superficial views which they entertain of sin.

What constitutes the great evil of sin? and in what does its heinousness and criminality *chiefly* consist? Most surely, in its being committed against God. This is the view that David had of sin, in the days of his penitence and deep humility on account of his own transgressions. It must be admitted, that David's sins against his neighbor were of the deepest dye; and of the most aggravating character:—yet, in his confession, he evidently considers the all overwhelming source of his *guilt* and condemnation, to be his *sin against God*. His expression is remarkably striking—"Against thee, **THEE ONLY** have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight."—But what are the views *now* entertained by the generality of men—professor and profane, respecting the heinousness of sin? Why, that its demerit consists, *almost* wholly, if not entirely in some *overt act*, in respect to our neighbor—and furthermore, that *such* a criminality, is to be *graduated* by the views that *men* entertain of such overt acts; or in other words by public sentiment! Never was there a truer statement than this, perhaps. It has been demonstrated in thousands of ways,—as I gave an instance in a former communication; respecting the minister who was so horror-struck at the thoughts of my being retained in fellowship after I had confessed my sin and implored forgiveness; and yet would fellowship and *commune* with churches and ministers, by hundreds, who clasped *slavery* in their arms; involving le-

galized, allowed licentiousness in its most loathsome forms. Now observe *this* remark, dear brother—O that it may be most deeply engraven on your heart. Sin in itself considered—that is, sin *against God* is not *realized* to be **DISGRACEFUL**, by those who fear being disgraced in fellowshipping any penitent sinner, however degraded in view of the world.

In what does the *disgrace* of sin principally consist? I mean the *real* disgrace in the sight of God and of all disinterested holy intelligent beings? Why, most certainly in the very thing which constitutes its principal *criminality*:—its being committed against God. Well, these ministers and professors will all acknowledge that they have sinned greatly *against God*. That they sin against him more or less every day:—but do they feel as if they were *disgraced* by their sins—*deeply disgraced*:—*covered* with disgrace?—If they *do*, thus look upon themselves—and if they *do* thus consider the chief disgrace of sin, to consist in its being committed against God—why do they shun me as they do, and fear being *disgraced* by shewing *me* mercy when I beg it of them? Ah! my brother, you see the Monster Pharisee here most clearly detected! And, that he lives and *swells with pride* not only under the Arminian cloak, but, under the high Calvinist and Hopkinsian garb! Yes, after all of their *theorizing* in writing and preaching their orthodox views, respecting the great evil and shame of sin's consisting in its being committed against God, yet, when they were put to the test in their *practice*—they shut out the glorious and ever blessed God entirely! They come over completely, to the ground of certain pro-slavery men, who say to the abolitionists “your *theory* is *beautiful* and *good*; but it will not do to reduce it to practice!!”—Now, whether the position assumed by *William Law* be correct or not:—that so sure as a man has a correct view of his *own heart* and sins, he will consider himself a greater sinner than any other person—yet one thing I fully believe is as true as the divine oracles—viz: that if a person sees *himself* as he should, he will not feel to *exalt* himself

above the most disgraced sinner in the universe—and will be ready *immediately* to receive him into fellowship if he turn to God. But, if men habitually *feel* that the disgrace of sin consists in some certain *overt acts towards man*, then is such conduct, as has been acted out towards me very easily accounted for. They consider that *I* am disgraced by sin; and they are *not*; and they do not mean to contaminate themselves by coming near me—and, as they do not habitually feel themselves *disgraced* on account of sin, so, they do not habitually realize their *criminality* to be great:—and, as they do not habitually realize their *criminality* to be great, so as an *infallible consequence* they do not habitually realize the need of an infinite atonement for their sins:—and as they do not realize the indispensable necessity of an infinite atonement and Savior for *themselves*, so, when a sinner in *their view* becomes so criminal and disgraced as they look upon me to be, they cannot find *enough* in their views of the gospel to suffice for his *immediate forgiveness* and fellowship—and therefore resort to a substitute for the blood of Jesus—viz: *that of doing penance from four to eight years!* My dear brother this is a straight story and it is a true one. You see then how the glory of the gospel is lost sight of. Men have lost sight of the claims of God, the moral Governor of the universe as their law-giver:—consequently of their own great criminality and disgrace in *sinning* against HIM: and of course, there is no room in their minds for a right view of the Lord Jesus Christ, as mediator and savior of sinners. Now notwithstanding the greatness and enormity of my sins, yet I as fully believe as I believe that I exist, that if these ministers and professors who since my fall have been *practically* saying, “I thank thee O God that I am not like that publican” could see their own hearts and sins, in their true light, every *stone* which they have grasped, to dash my brains out, would instantly fall from their hands; and they would begin to hope, if there was mercy for *them*, there might be mercy for me also. O my dear brother, if you find yourself any where near the rocks and quicksands

of the ancient Pharisees—on which the “foolish Gallatians” foundered, *bear many* I beseech you into the broad, deep and shoreless ocean, of *Jesus’ atoning blood!* Many who sail under the pretended *broad pendant* of orthodoxy, are as completely ashore, as were the Gallatians. A *lady professor*, not far from this place, of the greatest pretensions to orthodoxy—since my fall, held forth the doctrine, that it must take years of penitence to rest me to the fellowship of God’s people. My dear brother, God has placed me in a most eligible situation to take a clear view of “*Protestant Popery*”—and this is what may be called high Hopkinism, Emmonsite Popery! Let no man accuse me of favoring the doctrine of Antinomianism—I abominate my own sin. I say that “the soul that sins it shall die.” But I say also that Jesus Christ has power on earth to FORGIVE sins. That his blood is sufficient to cleanse from *all sin* :—and, that he who lays any thing to the charge of a soul, justified by God, through faith in Jesus, makes war with the government of the great eternal, and virtually throws away the whole gospel—and that this has been abundantly acted out in relation to my case I think I have shewn to a demonstration.

O that God would raise up ministers and a people, that would *practically*, preach the whole gospel of Christ. I say *practically* dear brother;—for there are many, very many who theorise on it:—They condemn Unitarianism:—They talk about an infinite Savior:—and yet, they *practically* say they feel there is no such Savior—They say they feel themselves to be the greatest sinners that ever lived: and yet, when a poor sinner like me—disgraced in view of the world, cries to them for mercy, they stop their ears and fly from him, as they would if he were physically diseased with the plague! Men will do any thing else, before they will *practically* preach the gospel. They will give their goods to feed the poor; for, by it they *may* get honor—They will run the risk of being mobbed, in reprov-ing sin; for, by this they *may* get honor of man—Yea, they may give their bodies to be burned in order to save

their characters among men:—but who, O who, dare follow the example of Jesus, in taking to the arms of their fellowship a poor sinner, deeply disgraced in view of the world? Here is the most thorough test of *moral courage*, with which man was ever tried:—for, he who does this, is about as sure to be branded as being as vile as the person *has been* that he fellowships—and thus he loses his own reputation. This is the way in which Jesus lost *his* reputation with the Scribes and Pharisees. There were *two things*, in his conduct, which made him so obnoxious to their wrath, that they would not suffer him to live. One was, he would not admit that *their* righteousness—as highly as they thought of it, was sufficient to save them—“Except your righteousness (says he) exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven:”—and the other, was, he told them that those whom they considered the most disgraced sinners might be saved through him—“Verily, I say unto you that Publicans and Harlots shall enter into the kingdom of God before you.” Ah, they could not endure Jesus on this account—his receiving sinners and eating with them, while he told his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees—the *doctrine* of the Pharisees, was more than they could away with:—and those who now dare to imitate Jesus, in *practically* preaching the gospel, will meet with similar treatment from those of a similar spirit and views. O if I had the voice of an angel, I would cry to all the ministers and professors of this land, and ask them who, who, among them dare act like Jesus in this respect. We may engage zealously in all the causes of reform—such as Temperance, Anti Slavery &c. and still not come up to this point:—because, in carrying forward these causes, their advocates stand upon the *law* of God, to *condemn sin*—but, to run the risk of being accused of *fellowshipping* iniquity, by giving fellowship to a disgraced penitent sinner, is what many which will do the former, dare not come up to! Indeed, my brother, as precious as are these causes—(and they never laid nearer my heart) yet

I tell you, that the advocates of them, need much grace and watchfulness, not to grow Pharisaical in carrying them forward. O I fear, greatly fear, that many, very many, after having been instrumental of a blessed work for the poor slave will *themselves* come short of heaven on the ground of trusting to their *own righteousness* for salvation instead of looking to Jesus. O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus—he is all and in all. I thought of dwelling at some length on that subterfuge resorted to by many in order to get clear of their duty in respect to such cases as mine—viz: that of saying they could *forgive* but not fellowship. But it needs it not. Let such persons, first prove that the glorious and holy God forgives those that *he* does not fellowship; or let them cease from such sophistry. Have they heard of such a thing in the conduct of God? And are they not solemnly commanded to forgive AS God for Christ's sake forgives them? Jesus Christ knew how contrary to the human heart was this doctrine of forgiveness; and he therefore set it forth in the clearest light; and guarded it from evasion. Hear what he says to Peter—"If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day, turn and say he repents, thou shalt forgive him." But dear brother, I fell down before them, said I repented and asked forgiveness and they would not grant it. Have they in this turned their backs upon the gospel, and laid fast hold of the old papal doctrine of doing penance or not? I leave it to your candor to decide by the word of God.—If they have, then are we in the midst of Popery—alias Phariseism under the *disguised* name of evangelical Protestantism! O God deliver thy people. I have only to add that after reading this letter I pray you to take your bible, turn to the 18th C. of Matt. and read the parable in the latter part. You will there have the unerring counsel of God respecting those who refuse to shew mercy to an imploring brother.* I shall trouble you with but a few more communications.

Your Affectionate Brother,

* See note next page.

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XVII.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison,*) Nov. 14TH. 1837.*My dear Brother:—*

There has been one developement in connexion with my fall, as undeniable, as it is astounding. I will present it to your mind in this place, because it holds a close connexion with the subject of my last communication. It is this:—*The present organization of denominations and churches as such, have no fellowship with David*—the inspired Prophet—the ancient king and sweet singer of Israel, and the *eminent type of our glorious REDEEMER!* Start not at this statement, as if it were a wild assertion, without proof: it has been indubitably proved in their conduct towards me since my fall. Do not think that by these remarks I mean to compare myself with David for *piety*. I am only shewing, that if my falling as I have, makes it indispensable that I should be shut out from the fellowship of God's people, notwithstanding I repent and cry for mercy, certainly David's fall must place him in the same situation. Can any one deny the inference? Observe; they took the ground that on account of the greatness of my sin—the *shame* and *disgrace* of it, I must at all events be excluded from the fellowship of the people of God. No matter what protestation I should make of my *sorrow* for my sin—no matter how low I might lay before them in the dust and implore mercy and forgiveness—I must on the top of the whole be excluded from the church. Some thought I ought *never* to be fellowshipped any more, and some that

* I ought to mention that I understood that Charles Simons of Attleborough, soon after my fall, advanced scriptural views in respect to my case---that he dared to pray for me in the pulpit and preached faithfully.

I ought to stand excluded and do penance "from four to eight years." And on what ground was this urged? I have already told you:—on the ground of the greatness or disgrace of my sin. Well David added to the sin of adultery that of murder—and, if the principle which they acted upon in denying *me* fellowship does not exclude David after his penitence and when he wrote the 51st Psalm, then *one* thing is certain, viz: That in their estimation the more numerous the sins, of a *similar character*, the *less* criminal the transgressor. Here again is a dilemma: let them take which *horn* they please. Every child, that knows any thing about a legitimate inference from a proposition, knows, that they *must* take one or the other:—either exclude David from their fellowship *when he penned the 51st Psalm*, or contend it is less criminal and disgraceful to commit adultery and murder, than to commit adultery alone! But let us make a supposition:—Suppose David himself, could be really now on earth: unknown, however to any one;—yet the very self-same David that he was when he wrote the 51st Psalm:—precisely the same in the sight of God: with all of his former piety and all of his penitence for his transgression—and suppose that it were known that he had committed the same sins which he did in the case of Uriah and his wife—I ask you if you think there is a prominent denomination or church in all this land, that would receive him into their fellowship, if there were no more inducements on the score of worldly honor or gain than there is to receive me? No, be assured there is not. I am *fully* convinced of this. They would want him to do penance *more* than from four to eight years I can assure you. The statement is therefore correct—that the present organization of churches and denominations *as such* have no fellowship for David: and I ask you if *here* is not a way mark, that shows us beyond controversy their great and awful departure from the real gospel way of salvation? Does the bible excuse David in sinning. No! but unqualifiedly condemns him;—yet notwithstanding all this, this same David, taking his life *altogether*, is represented as

one of the most pious men that ever lived. There is *that* said of him, which is not said of any other person spoken of in the holy scriptures—he is called a man after God's own heart. Nor, is this character for piety, confined to his life *previous* to his fall. Hear what God by the pen of inspiration records of him *after his death*. 1 Chron. 29 C. 28 v. "And he died in a good old age full of days riches and HONOR: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead." And you are well aware, that he is represented in the most honorable point of view, as a saint, by Christ and the Apostles. Now I wish to digress here a moment and call your attention to the *striking similarity* which there is, between the professed *christian* organization and the *Jewish* organization, when Christ appeared among them. How high were they, in their commendations of Moses and the Prophets—yet, at the same moment persecuting unto death Christ and the Apostles! Clearly evincing that if the same Moses and Prophets were then to have come among them they would have shewn them no more favor. And so now—not one of these popular preachers and churches, but what make their houses of worship ring with high encomiums of David. How they delight to read and sing his Psalms! Especially the 51st Psalm. No part of the Bible do they read so much: and, perhaps, there is no portion of the word of God that texts have so often been selected from as the 51st Psalm—written by David after his transgression: and yet if David, the *real man*, (stripped of all *worldly* appendages to induce them to take him by the hand) could be introduced to them, hardly one of them, could be induced to *shake hands* with him—much more give him the hand of *fellowship*! Gracious Redeemer, what delusion is here! How little do these professors know what is in their own hearts! My dear brother; I have no idea that he could get to a single communion table nor into a pulpit in this land. In what a state are the professed churches of God! They have no fellowship for David. This is no fiction. It is a sober *reality*. Perhaps there was no other way, in which I could have been brought

to see this so clearly as the one which God has taken: I mean by leaving me for a season to my own ways, and thus to fall into disgrace as I have: and my brother, why should I desire to have any more fellowship from them than David? I ought not: and by the help of God, I never again will give fellowship to any church that will not fellowship David. There has been one great and radical mistake in respect to my views and wishes since my fall: and that is, that I was anxious to urge myself into their communion. Nothing can be more foreign from my feelings. Not but what I fully believe that God has many dear children among them; but I fully believe that the proud, self-righteous and selfish spirit of this world, sits at their helm as bodies—That such a spirit holds the keys of admission and exclusion—and that God's real saints who are within their walls, are in *Babylonish captivity*. O that God would cause that solemn word to ring through and through their souls:—"Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." There never was any truth so clearly set forth, but what those who dreaded its power, would try to argue away its validity. Thus, when the case of David has been mentioned to some, they would immediately contend that it was not in point; there being so much more light now than there was then! I have already touched upon this objection in a former communication: but no matter if there is a little repetition on this point. These persons must be subjects of extraordinary illuminations themselves, who leave David so far in the rear!! How is it, that they quote the Psalms of this man—as *divine authority*, when they have got such a great distance the start of him in a knowledge of divine things! My brother, which is the most enormous—the *foolishness* or the *wickedness* of such an argument? Those who thus argue, seem more like persons enveloped in total *Barbarian darkness*, than persons of the deep and clear views, that David possessed, of the law of God—the nature of holiness and the exceeding sinfulness of sin? David lived under another dispensation

to be sure; in which things were allowed which are not now allowed. But, did that dispensation allow adultery? or murder? Did that dispensation alter the *nature* of sin?—Under what dispensation were the ten commandments given from Mount Sinai? Under the very dispensation which David lived. And who ever had a clearer view—a more thorough acquaintance with the letter and spirit of those ten commandments than David? And yet, those persons in order to get clear of shewing mercy and fellowship to a poor sinner like myself, will argue, that David's light respecting the moral law of God was quite dim when compared with what they possess!!! Consequently, his case is not at all applicable—not in point when considering mine. But my brother, they would be more consistent, *far* more, to take the ground of one of my most bitter, flaming, religious opposers in Pawtucket and argue that this holy man of God finally sunk to hell! Yes, when expressing her horror at the thought of giving *me* fellowship, the case of David was quoted, and she boldly declared that we had no evidence that David ever repented!! Yet this person is held in good standing and fellowship by popular professors. Perhaps you begin to say, enough. But how could I have said *less*? Can you now, for a moment question the entire truth of my proposition—That, the professed christian organization of this land, I mean as churches and denominations have no fellowship for David, the eminent type of our Lord Jesus Christ? From this point of observation, I ask you to look all around you; and ask yourself if it is not high time, for some one to go forth in the name and strength of God, and call upon the professed followers of a meek and lowly Jesus, to *come down* from these mountains of Pharisaical pride, into the valleys and green pastures: beside the still waters; where *David* found such comfort to his soul. O what delusion there is among them, pretending to read the Psalms, preach from them and sing them with delight, and yet have no fellowship for their author!

Your Affectionate Brother,
RAY POTTER.

LETTER XVIII.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison*,) NOV. 16TH. 1837.*My dear Brother :—*

In the account which I have given you of circumstances connected with my fall, I presented to your mind as I thought the contrast between the proud, unforgiving spirit of this world, and the merciful spirit of Jesus. In my 12th Letter I put the opposite conduct of certain persons, side by side; and I think you could not fail of seeing that the one was very much like the conduct and spirit of the ancient Pharisees, and the other like the spirit and conduct of Jesus. And, now, am I going too far, in saying that my dreadful fall, has developed the fact, that professors of religion in general, are as destitute of the *spirit* of Christ, as they are from possessing right *views* of the gospel? I would, by all means, avoid all unjust censure and all unrighteous judgment—and I know not, that I am conscious of the least feeling of revenge, or spirit of envy, to gratify in these remarks—I only desire to exhibit *truth*: and I desire to lean on the side of charity concerning the conduct of others:—To make all allowances, that can be made, without going directly in the face and eyes of truth, and contradicting the most stubborn facts:—and I would have you do the same. But still, after we have exercised charity to its utmost bounds, I think candor will compel us, on a survey of the whole case, to maintain the position which I have laid down. Let us look at it. How does the spirit of Christ, teach us to conduct towards fallen, disgraced, imploring sinners? We certainly have a correct answer to this question in looking at the conduct of Christ himself. And what was that? Why my brother, he came into the world; from the bosom of the Father, to *visit* them; to save them. This was his special business—the work he came to accomplish, and he never faltered in it, until he spilt his blood on Mount Calvary, and cried with his last breath, “It is finished!” Now, can we conceive, that I

appeared more sinful, more disgraced, in view of God's professed people, who, on account of my degradation, have kept aloof from me; than sinners in general, yea, the *least* sinner appeared in Jesus's view, before he visited this world? No one will hazard such an assertion;—for, what are our views of sin, when compared with his? Yet, this never kept *Jesus* away. No, notwithstanding the guilt and *degradation* of a lost world of sinners he came into it—he *visited* these sinners—he ate and drank with them; and although the *Pharisees* despised him for it, yet the Angels of God adored and worshiped him for it:—but what was the conduct of most professors towards me? My dear brother; I speak not now by way of *fault-finding*. No; I am sorry to be obliged to speak at all—but truth compels me:—and what was that conduct? Did they visit me?—No—I have already told you, that of the five hundred professors in Pawtucket, not more than perhaps ten, excepting those of the church of which I was pastor, ever came near me:—and while I was suffering too, in almost an unparalleled manner—and *while my cry for mercy, was all the time lying at their feet*. Come near me?—if you will believe me, they in many instances would not *look at me*. Numbers of them had to pass the house where I lived; and you cannot conceive in what a posture they put themselves, frequently, in passing. I believe they did not actually *hold their noses*, but in every other respect they resembled persons who were passing a place which they knew to be infected with some mortal, contagious disease—those too, who before my fall I had been intimate with for years. I ask you if this looks, and acts like the spirit of him who came into the world to save sinners? I know that they framed many excuses. One was, (and perhaps the most prominent,) my censuring professors of religion, in my address to the people of Pawtucket. But, (as I have once before said,) what spirit did they manifest *before* this came out? Precisely the same:—for, my *confession*, had been lying at their feet, in the most humiliating terms for nearly *three months* before this address. They heard so much

said, that was calculated to sink me in their estimation was another excuse. Well, did even the heathen Romans condemn a man unheard in his own defence? No! yet these christians thus condemned me! Did they ever come near me and ask me if various things which were stated concerning me were true? No never—but took one sided testimony *altogether*. I was tried by them *ex-parte*, and *without giving me a hearing* I was condemned. Now you know that every candid, impartial person would naturally conclude, that in a case like mine, thousands of false statements would be made concerning it; and that they would consider it their duty, to suspend judgment until they heard the accused in his own defence:—but it has not been so in my case. I have thought as I have already hinted, that there has hardly ever been an instance, in which so many *absolute and altogether unfounded lies*, were told, as has been the case in respect to my fall. Yet professors of religion, would seem to drink in these representations, as greedily as ever a thirsty ox drank water:—and, not only that, but in numberless instances fabricate them too. One would have thought that their motto and watch-word was, “he is down, and if lying and misrepresentation will effect any thing, we are determined to keep him there.” I know that some will be ready to say, the stories came to them so well *authenticated*, that they could but believe them.—They had them from eye and ear witnesses perhaps. I will give you a specimen of the truth of these eye witness stories. A certain woman holding a close relation with one of the ministers of this place, said, that one thing she knew was true—for she saw it with her own eyes—she saw a certain female come out of the house where I lived, with a *child* in her arms. Now, your imagination may supply what I forbear here to state respecting the inferences and construction, which would have been drawn and put upon that woman's story, if it had been true; and the use which she undoubtedly intended to make of it. Well, the truth was, she saw a female come out of the house with a cloak rolled up, in some *flannel*, designed to repair the lining!

I merely mention *this* as a *specimen* of the truth of the eye witness stories, that were rolled upon my devoted head, almost without number—and as for the ear witnesses, the reports which, undoubtedly, you heard of my preaching, since my fall, is a fair sample. Every day, almost, reports would be brief that I was preaching—and founded too, on the testimony of those who said they heard me—yes, they could take their *oaths* that they heard me—but still, it is God's truth that I never have attempted to preach, up to this day. I have prayed in some conference meetings, and two or three times said a few words sitting in my chair—but never have I gone farther; although I have been most earnestly entreated to do so. But, to return:—and thus much for the excuse of standing aloof from me on account of *hearing* so much. You know, my brother, it is not a valid one; but if they had done unto me as they would wish to be dealt with themselves, they would, as I have before said, suspend their judgment, until they had heard me in vindication or explanation. But I can tell you the secret of this; mark what I say. If, after my sin, I had taken a leap into open infidelity—or, if I had braved it out in *denying* my sin, they would have got along well enough—for, then they would have been under no obligation to have forgiven me and fellowshiped me; but, as I confessed my sin and sued for mercy, the only possible resort for them; in order to get clear of the plain commands of Christ, and grant me forgiveness, was, to make me out a consummate hypocrite, from first to last. To take bible ground and thus to forgive and fellowship me, was too much for the *pride of their hearts to endure*; as I have already shewn you in former communications: from hence, in order to ease their consciences, for refusing me forgiveness, they were willing to put the very worst construction on every thing concerning my case; and to give credit to almost every thing which was said about me. God forbid that I should judge unrighteous judgment, but I do most sincerely believe that this will be found to be a true illustration of this subject so far as many are concerned in the

great day of final retribution. There was another reason, no doubt, that operated powerfully with some—and that was, they wanted the inheritance! Of this I think I shall fully convince you in another communication, on the *power of sectarianism*. I will only now ask you, if it does not appear to *you*, that connected with my fall, the development has been fully made, that there is a great and lamentable want of the spirit of Jesus among his professed disciples? Now, in respect to their standing aloof, as they have done, I am willing to admit of every excuse and apology that can be offered with the least possible shew of reason—but that I have not judged rashly I think the following similitude will clearly demonstrate to your own mind, as it seems conclusive to my own. Let us suppose, that one of your children, whom you dearly love, and for whose life and future usefulness you feel a great anxiety is taken sick at a small distance from you—and, suppose with the news of his sickness, you have very discouraging intelligence in respect to the prospects of his recovery.—Do you suppose, that in such a case, you would feel willing to keep away from your child—giving him up for lost? No! nothing but insurmountable obstacles, could hinder you from flying to him: and notwithstanding all the *discouraging* accounts, which you had received from *others* concerning his state, you would still be disposed, if possible, to hope that there might be help for the child:—and, you would not only look on the *discouraging* symptoms, but you would mark every *favorable* token—you would feel of his pulse—watch his respiration with intense anxiety; and every indication which was given you, of the possibility of the recovery of your child, would buoy up your spirits and fill your heart with gladness. The application you perceive is most easy—you have no doubt, made it already. But let me ask you, if the conclusions are not irresistible? Should not the ties of grace be stronger than the ties of nature? And should not my professed brethren in Christ, have felt a stronger and more intense solicitude for my *spiritual* recovery, then they would have felt for the *natu-*

ral life of one of their children in such circumstances as we have just been supposing? And if they *had* felt such a solicitude, would they not have come and looked at me—and felt of my pulse? Let any candid person under heavens answer this question, and I venture to affirm that he will answer it in the affirmative. *It is a plain case.*—But did they do so? No—but every unfavorable symptom respecting my health, they were swift to give credit to—in their view, every thing concerning me was death, death, death; while an angel from heaven could hardly have made them believe that there was the least sign of spiritual life and recovery in my case. One thing in connection with this subject was most striking. When my confession first came before the public, many were perfectly satisfied with it—as in the instance of Gerrit Smith, the writer in the *Herald of Freedom*, &c. Yet others could see no signs of penitence in it at all. One minister in this region, said, as I understood, that there was no more evidence of penitence in it than there was in the devil! Do you think such persons *wanted me to live*? Look at the similitude of the sick child and judge. Never, perhaps, in this region, has a man fallen, on whose neck so many feet, professors and profane, were instantly placed to *keep him down*, as on the neck of your sinning and unhappy brother. One prominent individual, in conversation with one of my friends, a short time since, was honest enough to confess that he greatly feared I should rise again. I speak metaphorically, but it is a sober truth that there were persons in the region of Pawtucket, that were so greedy after “the inheritance,” that they were ready to bury me before the breath left my body. My dear brother, my soul is sick when I reflect on this subject. Where, O where was that spirit, which seeks to save that which was lost! I was like a mariner who had fallen overboard. Amidst the warring elements, breasting the mountain waves, I laid hold with one hand on the ship—cried for help! help! from my former ship mates—but the officers of the ship commanded my hand to be severed from my body, that I might again drop in

the deep—and it was done. I laid hold with the other, and met with the same fate! Then with bleeding stumps, erect by the hand of God alone preserved from sinking, I looked this way and that way, and cried for help and mercy—but the answer from the popular professors of the land was—sink him! sink him!—at least from four to eight years, lest we be **DISGRACED** with his company!! My brother, is *this* the spirit of Jesus?

I remain most affectionately Yours,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XIX.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*), DEC. 10TH, 1837.

My dear Brother :—

In the course of my communications, I have frequently adverted to the present *organization*, of the professed christian denominations and churches. In *this*, I will briefly give you my views, on that subject. To speak comprehensively, I fully believe, that *through* this organization the people of God have been carried into Babylonish captivity—you understand me to mean spiritually. To *shew* you *what* I mean, I will lay before you a specimen. Take, if you please, a single neighborhood. In it, are a number of humble christians. They are poor, as it respects this world's goods; for God's people are generally so.—They meet for worship, peradventure, in a school-room; or, in a private house. Their worship is simple, plain and spiritual. In the *same* neighborhood are numbers of rich and influential men, *destitute of true religion*. One writer observes, that man is a religious animal—and in a certain sense, this is strictly true; for men who are destitute of true religion, are always framing one to suit their own taste as a *substitute*. So with these rich, unconverted men under consideration. They cannot endure the humble, cross-bearing mode of worship, practiced by these poor saints—and so they go to work to provide a substitute; partly, no doubt, to ease their consciences for their

total neglect of religion—and partly to acquire a greater name for benevolence, and as being friendly, to the cause of God. They tell these poor, despised saints, it is a pity they can't have a *good meeting-house* to worship in. It would be far more *convenient*—besides, many persons of "*property and standing*," would then attend worship, who will not now come nigh. Here, the temptation first takes. It touches the remaining pride of their hearts—to rise into notice—to increase the numbers of their congregation.—Besides, satan here makes use of the specious argument, of its placing them in a situation to do more good. Well, now comes the proposal for an amalgamation of the church and the world. These rich influential men, propose to form a society made up of themselves and these humble christians, for the purpose of building a meeting-house and supporting a minister. It is agreed to readily. But mark—who has the *control* now? *The men who have the money.* And who are they? Why the rich, influential, unconverted men, we have spoken of. Here then, at the very onset, these christians have put their *necks under the yoke*—and this is their first entrance into the suburbs of old Babylon. In all the plans and operations of the society, in respect to building the house, unconverted men have the control, and these poor saints are only *nominal members*. Well, the work goes on. The house is completed. It is a *splendid* one. The fashionable ladies and gentlemen of the town, are highly pleased with it. Now, if they can obtain a *minister*, that will please them *as well* as the house does, all will go on well. Understand, the society has built the house, and the same society must support the minister; and of course they must have a minister which *suits them*; or, they will not support him. Suits whom? Why the influential men who govern. And who are they? We have just seen—*unconverted men*! A minister is therefore put on trial:—but if he preach the *whole truth of God*—and practice in accordance, he most certainly will not suit.—This *cannot* be, unless sin and holiness have changed their natures and became one. Besides, you remember these

fashionable gentlemen and ladies would not worship Christ in the *manger*. The minister, therefore, must *trim* to suit the society, and I am sorry to say, that it does not generally take long to find one that will do it. The work is then finished. The saints are thrown into the *background*. They become mere cyphers, as to influence, and the whole control of the *ministry*, as well as other concerns of the church, is *virtually* thrown into the hands of unconverted men.— Now, my brother, do you not know that this is a *fair specimen* of the condition of the present organization of churches and denominations in this land? so far as your observation has extended? It is so. I have often said, that I wished some one would write a book entitled the “*Devil’s Traps*.” Here, you have one of his snares.— By it, he has lead away God’s Israel into captivity. You see the *minister*, must suit the society—and the controlling influence of the society is made up of unconverted men—which is nothing less than the *spirit of this world*. Consequently the ministry must gauge themselves by this standard: or they cannot get a *settlement*, or *salary*. What next? Why this same influence, throws itself clear back to the fountain head. I mean into the colleges and schools, where, (as the saying is,) young men are fitted for the ministry. Now admitting that the young man before he commences this work of “fitting for the ministry,” has piety, and some notions of being faithful to God; he is soon taught that such and such notions will not do—and thus he is *heved* and (not squared, but) *rounded* to suit this state of things. Did you ever hear the story, of a certain celebrated teacher, in one of the principal theological schools in this country, telling young men who were fitting for the ministry under his care, that they had better not pray *aloud* for the slaves! This will serve for a specimen.— Now, I will not say that the ministry of this land is made up of unconverted men. God alone knoweth the *heart*:— but I will say that it most clearly appears to me, that as a *general thing*, they are gone into captivity, in the manner which I have been describing. What a state of things!—

I saw it, measurably years ago—but I was not so faithful to the light which was given me, as I should have been. I virtually held on upon these Babylonish garments. I hated to give up my *good name*—and take unmingled reproach from “Old Babylon.” Although for twelve years, I have *nominally* kept clear from this state of things, yet I virtually, as I before said, held on upon them in many respects. I conformed, most wickedly conformed, to many of their modes and maxims. But I fell—fell into deep disgrace—so true it is, that he who will save his life shall lose it. Nevertheless, I feel as if I had experienced a *great deliverance in this respect*; although it has been at such a great expense. To those who see these things as I have seen them for years—but who are halting between two opinions about coming out of Babylon, I would if I could speak to them, give them a most solemn warning to *make haste*. I often think when reflecting on this subject, of some words we used in play, when I was a little boy—“Sit down or I will knock you down.” O I would say to every soul that ever has tasted the love of God—and who has got into Babylon—and of course *exalted* in the estimation of this world—“get down quickly, before you are knocked down” You see *I* was knocked down. I pray others may take warning—but make haste and *come down*, that they may receive Jesus into their houses. Now, after a church goes into captivity, in the manner which I have already described, it becomes a real snare to catch every young convert in the neighborhood, and lead him into the same state. For, he feels as if he ought to unite with the people of God—to join the church:—So he joins the church, and by joining the *church* he goes into captivity. O my brother, who will sound the alarm? Who will make war with Babylon? Who dare do it? Behold her *walls*—her *towers*—her *riches*—her *honor*—her *glory*—her combined power and determination to resist at the onset, the weapons of truth, wielded by the despised followers of Jesus. *But she must come down*. It is written in the book of God’s decrees—and I trust, that the time is at hand!—

But O what a conflict will precede! In her self conceited glory, she will appear for a while to scorn all attempts at her overthrow, as Goliath did David. But when she discovers *breaches* made in her walls—then will fall the storm of her indignation upon the true soldiers of the cross, who are besieging her. Colleges—Theological schools—Dr's. of Divinity—ministers by thousands—worldly professors—denomination selfishness—and the whole host of Pharisees, all fly to her rescue—but all in vain. The voice of God will be effectual—"Come out of her my people"—*and they will come*. If in no other way they will be thrust out—or in other words, they will be "knocked down." Then will come her final, her great fall and ruin. "And he cried with a mighty strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Glory to God for this prophesy. God hasten the *fulfilment*. O, it seems to me, that I hear the rumbling of his chariot wheels, coming to deliver Zion.—O for a *holy, faithful ministry*—called of God, and filled with the Holy Ghost, to enter into this work. My dear brother arm yourself for the fight. As I lay here, bleeding at every pore—with broken bones—covered with wounds, I say unto you *fight*—in the name of God I say, *fight the battles of the Lord Jesus*. Give no quarters to Babylon.—No my brother; *half way work* will never do. I tried that course more than fifteen years. There must be a thorough, entire, radical and final coming out from the present state of things, on to the ground occupied by Christ and the Apostles. Instead of the doctrine and practice of the Pharisees, the pure and the whole gospel must be preached and acted out. When a ministry shall arise, that shall thus preach and act—that will make no compromise with the proud and selfish spirit of this world, then may we lift up our heads and rejoice, for the redemption of Zion draweth nigh. O it is enough to make one weep and groan in spirit, to see the *delusion* which now so generally prevails among what is termed the Protestant churches. They are

bewailing the Catholic abominations—and as I have before said, warning the nation to beware of Catholic usurpation; when, they *themselves* have gone into Babylonish captivity, in precisely the same way that the Romish Church did, in the days of Constantine. The bible, in a great measure is forsaken, and *public sentiment*, substituted in its stead for a rule of faith and practice—and I am obliged to say, that in “fitting men for the ministry” as it is termed—man, yes, vain man, has to an awful extent, assumed the province of the Holy Ghost—and substituted the wisdom of the world—and *excellency of human speech*, for the demonstration of the spirit and power of God. O God deliver Zion. So prays your unworthy but

Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XX.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*,) DEC. 16TH, 1837.

My dear Brother:—

Sectarianism, in the proper acceptation of the term, is purely selfish, and is one of the *forms* in which self-righteousness exhibits itself. Self-righteousness takes pride in that which is *our own*—and may as readily seize on “our denomination,” for such a gratification, as on anything else. Indeed, it assumes a very specious form when coming in this shape; for notwithstanding its *intrinsic* deformity and extreme loathsomeness in the sight of God, it assumes the garb and makes pretensions to great zeal for the Lord of Hosts. How many are driving forward in preaching, and praying, in going to meeting and observing religious ceremonies—in exhorting sinners to repentance and building up churches, in forming benevolent societies and sending out missionaries, in building meeting-houses and supporting ministers, promote revivals, under the pretence of a desire to glorify God and save souls; when, all the while the very *main spring* of their action, is, this same self-righteous sectarianism? Multitudes, without doubt.

Yet these same persons, I doubt not, are so *self-deceived* in respect to the *motives* which influence them, that they look upon their doings and sayings with much self complacency; as designed to advance the glory of God, and pure religion in the world. Not that they are *necessarily* deceived—for, they might try themselves by the unerring standard; but, they neglect this and pass on in their own delusions. Indeed, this disease has greatly infected real christians in the different denominations; and they will sooner or later be astonished beyond expression, to see how they have been deceived by it. It is, without doubt, one of the greatest curses to the cause of Christ in existence, and one of the greatest hindrances to its prosperity. One writer considers it the "*mark of the beast*," spoken of in Revelations. It must be done away, before the commencement of the Millenium. To shew you a specimen of its hideousness and deformity, is the object of this communication. I wish you to observe; that I do not consider the denomination to which the persons belong, who were actors in this scene, *more* under the influence of sectarianism than other denominations. No—nor the *church* of which they are members, more than other *churches*. Indeed, I think some of the members of that church are as free from it, as almost any persons in the world. What I shall say, I mean to apply to those *individuals*, and those *alone*, who engaged in the transactions. But, that there *were* individuals who engaged in transactions relative to my fall, which most clearly developed this loathsome spirit, I think you in the sequel will readily admit. God who knows the secrets of all hearts knows, that I make this statement not from the least hard feeling which I entertain towards any of the actors in this scene. No: I *love* them—*sincerely do I love them*. But I do it *solely*, (if I have the least knowledge of my own heart,) to draw a faint picture of the enormities of *sectarianism*, which I myself have in former years, been as deeply involved in, perhaps as almost any other person; but which I now see to be infinitely deleterious to the advancement of the cause of the blessed

Redeemer. Let me in the first place shew you the temptations to its exercise. You well understand the ground on which I stood, and the church under my care before my fall, in respect to denomination connexions. We maintained the independent form of church government. That is, that every church is solely dependent on God—on his word *alone* for all necessary directions in faith and practice:—and that denominational connexions, as they *now exist* are Anti-Christian. That under the immediate supervision of the Apostles, in the primitive ages of the church, no such *organizations* existed:—that every individual church was independent of all other churches; and recognized no higher ecclesiastical tribunal on earth, in the administration of its government. Now, this stand, *you* very well know, was extremely obnoxious to the displeasure of sectarians. Although many of them professed to regard me as a christian—and to approve of *some things* in me very highly, yet, *this*, they could by no means away with. However, there was a large church raised up under my instrumentality, who maintained these principles; and just before my fall had come into possession of a large and commodious *meeting-house*. To obtain that meeting-house, I labored, I believe, in an *unparalleled manner*. At a time when I had no stated salary—and hardly knew from one day to another, where bread was coming from for myself and family, I undertook the mammoth work of collecting money by subscription, to pay for it. We bought it of the Universalists, and I think the whole amount to be paid, was not far from four thousand dollars. What a sum for an individual to grapple with in my circumstances! Yet I engaged it. I had to beg the money—that is, get it subscribed, then collect it—do all the business in paying it over, &c. &c. I not only travelled through this region, but visited towns and cities many hundred miles distant. I suffered much—depriving myself of the comforts and necessities of life in my journeys. I travelled one whole hot summer's day in a certain neighboring city, and got only one dollar. I sent hundreds of letters in every direction

to obtain help in paying for the house. I gave in about one hundred dollars of my *own money*—that is, money which was *given to me*, to help along the work. One man in my native town, said, he would not give a cent towards the house, yet gave me fifty dollars—and I put in every cent of it. Besides the money which I gave, I threwed in about *sixty dollars*, due me for a periodical work which I published. After toiling in this manner for about two years, or more, I succeeded in raising and paying over, if I mistake not, nearly three thousand dollars. The debt was so reduced, that I thought we could manage so as to meet it; and I concluded to rest from this toil. About this time the church voted to allow me a stated salary of about four hundred dollars a year:—and, about *this time* I fell! I cannot digress to follow out reflections which naturally arise here. Now, what would have been the voice of pure and disinterested religion, in view of all this? Why, although it might have plainly seen, that I was too intent on getting this house—too anxious to be like other nations, to have a king—and, although it abhorred the *sin* which brought me down—yet, it would have wept most freely over *my* woe: and it would have began most earnestly to enquire, “Is there still no hope for the man? May it not be possible for the child yet to live?” Yes my brother, you know, and every one knows, that this would have been the language of true religion, while bending over this heap of ruins. Not so with selfish sectarianism. No! the language of *that*, was, “He is dead: now then, for the inheritance. Here is a large church and meeting-house, and now for an accession to our denomination; and in order to accomplish this to our *honor* and *profit*, it is necessary that he should be out of the church and out of the place. It is important that he be out of the *church* on account of the disgrace which would be connected with his remaining in it: although ever so penitent:—and, it is important that he should be out of the way, *entirely*, for fear that even his *dead body*, if he remain in Pawtucket streets, will have an influence to thwart our plans. It will not do for him

even to be buried in Pawtucket, for fear that the members of the church, while reading the inscription on his tomb stone, should seem still to hear a voice from his lifeless corpse, bidding them to remember the truth which he *did* tell them, and to beware of selfish sectarianism, as they would a satellite of satan." My brother, I am not *over-coloring* this picture. No. I was compelled to believe that this very work was going on in Pawtucket, in a very few days after my fall. Yes, God let me see the visage of this monster, *sectarianism*, in circumstances calculated to make a most deep and lasting impression on my own mind—in circumstances, which prepared me most clearly to make the contrast between its spirit and practice, and that of the religion of Jesus. Heaven and Hell are scarcely more opposite, than the one is to the other! But I lay before you facts to substantiate what I have said, and to shew you that my views in relation to this case, are something more than "evil surmisings." Very soon after my confession, perhaps in the course of three days, certain professors of religion began freely to express themselves, that the only way for the church to be saved, was to join a certain denomination. My views of standing *alone*, were then held up, as resulting in a complete failure—for they said, "You see the result:—the minister is fallen, the church is in trouble, and they have nobody to help them. A certain *minister*, is said to have abounded in language similar to this—as well as a number of private members. These persons, let it be understood, manifested from the first, a great zeal that I should be out of the church:—especially, the minister. But a day or two after I made my confession, he fell in with one of the members, and plainly told him, that if the church did not exclude me, the church under his care, could have no fellowship for them: and all along he and others already alluded to, strongly insisted that I ought to *leave the place*. Now just at this time, they began to be very thick with Archippus and his party: were heart and hand with him in his proceedings in the church—in excluding members, &c. which I have already

before you. Well, now for the clue to this affair, I believe will satisfy you that I am correct in my notion of their *motives* and conduct. Their answer to no doubt, if you were to enquire of them, why they so zealous that I should be out of the church and out of place, would be—'That they thought it their duty, to shew their abhorrence of the *sin of licentiousness*. To observe—while these very words are flowing from their lips, they clasp Archippus close to their bosoms!—they have *full fellowship for him*. You may ask if they are not ignorant of the charges alleged against him—what he had actually confessed? Ignorant my brethren very persons, or a number of them were well informed of his conduct, *before I had hardly heard a whisper of it*. Every woman of which I have already spoken, who accused Archippus of so insulting her, that she dared not stay in the house on his account, was a member of the *same church*—in good standing! They had often heard statements—or heard of them—and Mrs. W. declares a respectable sister of that church, living in the immediate neighborhood, was present, when Archippus made confession which I have already spoken of—and furthermore, some of these *very persons*, professed to be so displeased with his conduct, that for a considerable time, they refused to attend our conference meetings on his account. But *now*, they could most heartily fellowship Archippus—but were horror struck, at the thought of my retaining in the church, for fear of giving countenance to licentiousness! My brother—is not here another dilemma! But all this and more too. Now this minister had so much concerning me, that he soon about came to a conclusion in his own mind, that I was a hypocrite. Did I say nothing respecting Archippus? But further—in order to show how much he was influenced by the dread of whispering *licentiousness*, let me state this is the *same* man in a former communication I alluded to, who arrived with all his might, in favor of retaining southern sinners in fellowship; who nursed slavery in their very

bosoms. Now you know and every one else knows, that *slavery* tolerates licentiousness in all of its most loathsome forms. It boldly nullifies the marriage covenant and puts the seventh commandment of God under its feet—I say it does all of this and a thousand fold besides—yet, this man contended with all his might, that he ought not to break fellowship with churches that are *immersed* in this abominable system, and told a certain man that he would give him one month to bring forward a single passage of scripture to prove that he ought to break fellowship with those southern churches! Now my brother can you believe, can any man believe, who has the least candor that *that* minister was really influenced by a godly fear of fellowshiping licentiousness which induced him to take the stand which he did in respect to my exclusion from the church and banishment from the village? Supposing I *were*, what he was wont to represent me; a hypocrite—and was not penitent—how was it that he was all at once so *pinusly affected* in respect to a church that retained *one* licentious person in its fellowship, while he clung with all his *fellowshiping powers* to churches that openly, and professedly viudicate slavery, which tolerates *universal* licentiousness, in those whom it robs of liberty! Can you put these things together and reconcile them? No! You cannot. Ah, here is the revelation of the thoughts of *more* hearts. This is all easily enough solved. To break fellowship with southern churches that openly tolerates all kinds of licentiousness will weaken our *sect*—but in order to *get* a church and meeting house *into* our sect, it is necessary that a fallen though imploring man should be excluded from the church and banished from his home! *This is the explanation* my brother:—without doubt this is the *true* one. It speaks for itself. It cannot be fairly misunderstood. And further—we can make *use* of Archippus to *help* our plan forward—to make an accession to our denomination—we will therefore take him to our arms and nurse him—though one of our own members charge him with vile conduct—though he has made the confession which he has and then

denies it—we will hold *him* fast ; but the other man we must crush—he must not only be out of the church but out of the place for fear that he will be detrimental to the growth of *our denomination* by hindering the church of which he formerly had the care, from uniting with us.— I make this statement, in full view of the probability, that if ever it is made public, a thousand venomous sectarian darts, will instantly be poured from their quivers; aimed to destroy me. But I feel it my duty to exhibit a specimen of sectarianism—and ought it not to be done? But further, this same minister has had an opportunity since my imprisonment of more clearly developing the character of sectarianism and the motives which influenced him in his conduct towards me. A petition to the General Assembly was presented to him, to head, for my liberation from prison. He utterly refused to do it except a condition were inserted in it that I should leave the place. He said a great many would sign a petition for my liberation if I would leave the place. He was told I had before left the place but the mob followed me. He said I did not go far enough: my friends kept up a constant correspondence with me. If I would go fifty miles off I would not be troubled. He would come under *bonds* that I should not be troubled or mobbed. Now what is the plain English of this? Why this is it. “If he will not leave the place I will not so far as my influence extends let him out of prison:”—or which is the same thing, “If he will not leave the place; so far as my influence extends, I will *keep him in prison.*” Now, my brother, I desired to live in Pawtucket, that I might shew by my future conduct and conversation that although I had greatly sinned—yet I did still love God and his cause: and that I sincerely repented of my sins. And I desired to shew this to the very people among whom I had fallen and sinned. This was according to *your* advice also. Besides, I had *some* invaluable friends there, who in my wretched state, afforded me in many ways great assistance—and as I have before said, I knew of no place under the heavens to resort to, where I

could obtain a subsistence for my helpless family. This was my situation—and now mark the position of this minister towards me. It was not enough that I had suffered already as I have shewn you in the preceding communications—but it was now a time for him to take *advantage* of my wretched condition in a loathsome prison to drive me to submit to a condition which all along had been so dear to his heart, viz: that of being banished from my native state! Out of the *place* would not satisfy him—I must go at least fifty miles off—which would carry me beyond the limits of Rhode-Island. In the month of November, with a dreary winter before me, I must take my family—a number of whom were helpless—without a dollar to help myself with, and pitch my tent among strangers, and I must go, too, where, if I were suffering the utmost distress, I could not be helped by my friends in Pawtucket! Now *here*, my brother, you have a specimen of Sectarianism—for all of this must be done, in order that the plan might be accomplished, of getting the church and *meeting-houses* “into our denomination;” Don’t you see?—he must go where he will not keep up a *correspondence* with his friends *here*. I think that John Quincy Adams, has at some time used the phrase, “Sublime beauties of slavery;” *here* you have a specimen of the SUBLIME BEAUTIES OF SECTARIANISM! There is no doubt, but what one argument of this minister and that of his coadjutors is vindication of my banishment, is, that if I staid in the place, there would be a mob. Aye, my brother—and they ought to be met, with the sentiment addressed by Dr. Channing to the people of Boston. “A government that announces its expectation of a mob, does virtually, though unintentionally, SUMMON A MOB, and would then cast all the blame of it on the “rash men,” who might become its victims.” Never, was there a truer sentiment than this:—it is what I have all along, you know, contended for—and its application to this case of mine stands thus—“The influential men in a place, who announce their expectation of a mob, do virtually, though perhaps unintentionally

summon a mob." O yes my brother—no doubt but what he will still ground his objection to my staying in the place, on his fears, that if I stay, there will be mobbing! but *you see the bottom!* Besides, the mobbing had ceased for weeks, *before* I came to prison. I shewed you how God delivered us; and even the mob themselves, some of them, I understood, said, I had suffered enough. So you see the *mob* were satisfied; but not so with Sectarianism. No—that must still follow me; and this man, must stand ready to make use of the extremity to which I was reduced, to *banish* me from my *home*—my native state—beyond the reach of *your* sympathy and that of my other relatives—beyond the help of other friends, who, notwithstanding my sin, still can pity me when in distress! I know it will be said, that this minister *did* sign the petition. And when my brother? Just when he saw it going without him. He will not deny, but what at *first*, he refused to sign it—that he urged such a condition, on the ground that it would induce a great many to sign it, &c.

Now within these prison walls—in my fallen, disgraced state—I present to you this picture of sectarianism.—It is a true one. God grant that you may heed it—and shun it as you would the *mark of the Beast*. I know the consequences to myself, if this is made public. A thousand sectarian tongues, (as I before said,) will instantly emit their poison. *My* sin, will be the *covering* for all this.—The great fear of countenancing licentiousness, will be eloquently talked of—but as this talk flows from their lips, I wish you to look a little *lower*, and you will see Archippus lying in their bosoms, nourished and fed—and so far as the *minister* is concerned, southern churches *clasped* heartily *there* too, with all the licentiousness of slavery! But to return—*here*, is the *under current*, which, if you recollect, I spoke of, in giving an account of the doings of Archippus and his party in the church. I early saw it. I was writhing under it, when I wrote my address to the people of Pawtucket—and this accounts for some *allusions* in that address. Time develops things; and what would not then

have been believed but by a few, is now more manifest.—These persons, at an early date, as I before said, commenced a close intimacy with some of Archippus's party, as well as himself; and things moved on in harmony, until last September, when Archippus's party made a proposal for the *church* to join the denomination! I say his party—for, notwithstanding the church consisted of about two hundred and fifty members, yet only eleven voted to join. I mean male members. But they were not received. No, some things were evidently, too glaring; and notwithstanding the indefatigable labors of this man, who has been so intent on *my banishment*, with those who have acted with him, the case was postponed another year. I know there are members in that church, that abhor such proceedings. So far from laboring to *banish* me from my home, they have manifested towards me, kindness and christian conduct. I love and honor them. Nevertheless, I have drawn a true picture. If all are offended with me, I cannot help it. I fully believe the time will come when many persons in Pawtucket, will see the *truth* of what I say—and when they will be convinced that it was not for “my transgression,” that such powerful efforts were made to banish me—but that with other causes, there was this “*under current*” of selfish sectarianism, moved on by the *fear*, that I should rise again. Nor let any one think, that this sectarianism, is confined alone, to the persons here alluded to. No, it stalks through the land—bearing the name of religion—yet tearing in pieces, and stamping under its feet, almost all which is lovely, among the people of God. God hasten its overthrow!

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XXI.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*,) DEC. 21st, 1837.*My dear Brother :—*

The question is often anxiously asked, in respect to myself: "Will he ever rise again?" In giving my own views on this question, I wish to understand what is meant by it. If, the meaning be, "Will he ever rise in the estimation and fellowship, of the present professed christian organization"—the answer is ready. No! never: but in all probability, will sink *lower and lower!* Now, the way for me to have arisen in *this* sense, would have been to turn sycophant—profess repentance, not only for my *sins*, and transgression, by which I fell, but, for the *truth*, which I have told, in days past, in respect to sectarianism and many other things. Also, I must cordially embrace the Popish doctrine of doing penance; and, the *fundamental* principle so prevalent, "That it is a sure sign that a man is impenitent, if he *speak the truth* in respect to others. Besides, I must never open my mouth against any of their dogmas, maxims, or conduct; however Anti-Christian and unscriptural. Now, God forbid, that ever I should seek to *rise* in the estimation of man, by pursuing *such* a course as this. And by the grace of God, all may rest assured, that I never shall. If *this* is what is meant by the question, I think all may set their hearts at rest, both friends and foes, that I *never shall rise!* And as to the remark which I made, that I should sink lower and lower in their estimation, I think you will infer the same probability, when you consider the effect, which the *little truth*, had upon them, contained in my "address to the people of Pawtucket." You know how they declared, that it *sunk* me in their estimation. What then will be the consequence if you publish *these* communications! Can you not calcu-

late? Surely, I shall have erased from their minds the last relict of hope, which they may have entertained, that I should, *in their view*, ever become penitent. Is it hard to conceive, that every selfish sectarian, that takes this publication into his hands, will look at its pages, through his prejudiced, Sectarian *magnifying glass*? All of the *truth* which it contains, he will *cover up with my sin*: while, most diligent search will be made for imperfections: and, if they are *found*, they will be sounded out, with an emphasis of thunder. But the *greatest* wonder of all, among these people, who so admire the *51st Psalm*, and the *preaching of Peter after his fall*, will be, that *I*, after my great sin and fall, should undertake thus to speak—even if what I have said is true. This, in *their* estimation, will be unpardonable: and consequently, their wrath will come upon me to the uttermost. If ridicule, will not answer; and they find the developments which I have exhibited, are likely to gain a place in the public mind, I have no doubt, but the utmost exertions will be made in other ways, to utterly crush me. I have already felt some of the *power* of selfish sectarianism, as I have shewn you; and I know how to expect its mountain weight upon me. These are my views about sinking lower and lower in the estimation of the present professed christian organization *as such*:—and, in view of it, some may be ready to ask me with surprise, why I pursue a course, that will, in *my own opinion*, result in such consequences to myself. I would answer: that for fifteen years or more, I have had light upon the present state of the professed christian organization, that I have not fully lived up to. I did indeed, *nominally* stand aloof from it, in *some respects*, but in other respects, I virtually supported it. I could not bear to lose my reputation *entirely*, with these *great sects*, and their ministers and supporters:—and, seeing within their borders, many *individuals* of great worth and merit, I strove vainly to serve two masters. That is, to be an Anti-Sectarian *partly*, and partly *not*. Well, what was the issue! It seems to me that I hear the voice of God, coming from the awful

scenes which I have passed through, speaking like this— ‘ You loved your *own* reputation so well, that you would not be faithful to the light which I gave you; but clung to the suburbs of Babylon; the mother of Harlots. Behold, I have now left you to *fall into such disgrace*, that those very sects and denominations, whose approbation you were so fearful of losing, will now spurn you from their company; for fear, you will *disgrace* them! You are now *thrown* off from them: but how differently from what you ever expected! with broken bones, accompanied with the loss of your good name entirely.’ Well, dear brother—I praise God for all of this. Better, far better, do I esteem it, thus to be *thrown* from the parapets of Babylon; even at the expence of *broken bones*, than to perish by and by within her walls, amidst the crash of her towers, and Anti-Christian bulwarks. *They must come down.* God has spoken it. And shall *I*, now, after all this, try again to gain an admittance within her gates? No! God preserve me.

Multitudes, I believe, there are, connected with the present sects and parties, who are real christians; and many of them, are grieved to the heart, in view of the present Anti-Christian state of things, and wish to see things reformed:—but, mark the *general mistake*. They seem to be expecting that *BABYLON will be reformed*. Now, there is no such *promise* in the word of God: Babylon, is to be *destroyed*: not reformed: and the word from heaven is, “ *Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*” The present professed Protestant denominations, may try to confine Babylon, here, to the *church of Rome*—yet, it avails nothing, with the candid Anti-Sectarian, who looks at the present organization, in the light of God’s word. Having this view of things; although, as I have before said, I have been *thrown off* from the present organization, at such an expense, I am, notwithstanding, content to *remain* separate. Yea, it is my *choice and my joy*—and be assured that I *tell* you the truth—that I would not be placed *back again*, in this respect, for all the praise of man which I enjoyed be-

fore my fall, and a thousand times more: nor, shall I hesitate, by the help of God, to do my duty, in *speaking of these things*, though I sink a thousand times *lower* than ever, in the estimation of Sectarians. With me, the Rubicon is passed; although in a *strange and mysterious manner*:—and, from henceforth, I am an irreconcilable opposer to the present organization—as such. I doubt not, but God has many, very many people connected with it:—indeed, if it were not so, how could he say concerning Babylon, “come out of her my people.”* But as for the organization *itself*, I most solemnly believe it to be *Anti-Christian*—and that it never will be *amended*, but be *destroyed*! We must look for a *new order of things*:—and for the people, of God to take a stand, where the *supremacy of the Bible*, will be acknowledged in *all things*. O how I used to pant for such a state of things: but still, I would not break away from all entanglements, and *stand* there. I greatly desired some

* This is a point, which, I think, is too much over-looked by many, who oppose the present state of things---they are too apt to unchristianize all connected with it. It ought ever to be remembered, that real christians, in such cases, may be involved in a connection with great errors. Look at Kempis Fenelon and Lady Guion. Who with christian candor, can dispute their piety? Yet they lived and died in communion with the Catholic church. Is it necessary, in order to condemn the abominations of that church, at the period at which they lived, to deny that these individuals were christians? I think not:—and on the SAME PRINCIPLE, I have never felt it necessary, in order to condemn slavery, to take the stand, that no christian can now be connected with it. Real religion, may consist with great blindness, in respect to some particular subjects. Look at Peter; and see his blindness, and traditional prejudice, in respect to the Gentiles, even after the day of Pentecost, and after being filled with the Holy Ghost! But here is the point. When a real christian's mind is ILLUMINATED, and called up to any subject, and he sees it to be sinful he WILL NOT LIVE AND DIE IN IT---but the hypocrite will, if it serves his selfish ends: and here lies the difference between them.

one to take the lead. I used to think much of one man, that I hoped would go before me in such a work. But "cursed is he who maketh *flesh* his arm"—as lovely as *that* man is—he too stopped at the half-way house; and I have been thrown upon the ground, which I longed to see him and others occupy, (that I might come after them,) by this dreadful wreck! Well, by the grace of God, here will I stay until death—and you may *remember*, that it is not beyond the power of God, to make my fall, and the position in which I am placed by it, *instrumental* of the commencement of a great and glorious work in dispelling Babylonish mists, that now obscure the glory of God's Israel! O how surely would he secure all the glory to himself, by so doing—and how it would mash the viper head of self-esteem to atoms, for any one to stand with *me* on this ground!—"Every mountain shall be made low, and the LORD ALONE SHALL BE EXALTED IN THAT DAY." All of our moral reformers, almost, have got something more to do, than they ever have done yet, if they will do the whole work of God, *fully*. They have got to cease from trying to *reform* Babylon, and must *come out* from her: and bow unreservedly to the teaching of God, by his word and spirit *in all things*. Thus much, for my views of rising again in the estimation and fellowship of the present organization. But another answer might be given to this question—"Will he rise again?" I fully believe that I am *now* full as high in *their* estimation, as the *whole truth of God* is!! Of this, I have no doubt. Why, then, should I desire to rise *higher* in the estimation of man, than the whole truth of God? Ah, *this* has been *my* sin, and consequent calamity:—and I believe it to be the great sin, which, at this moment, keeps thousands back from duty. Yes, my brother—let any man in this nation, who now possesses the *fairest reputation with men*, take the whole truth of God:—preaching it and practising accordingly; and he will not have travelled many leagues, before he will be willing to exchange reputations with *me*, without any apprehension of loss! *Of this, I say again, I have not the*

least doubt. Did Jesus maintain a better reputation with the Jews, than the penitent prostitutes that he pardoned, and took into fellowship? No—nor so good a one. Anti-Slavery men, have hardly began to be besmeared with the odium, which they would be, if they were to come out for the truth in *all things*:—for it is beyond dispute, in my own mind, that if any of their number were disposed to do so, three quarters at least, of the remainder, would turn upon them with downright opposition. The views which I here present, may appear strange, but I believe them to be true. O my brother—when will God raise up a ministry, who will be willing to live and die by the *whole truth*, let what will be the consequences? I believe the time is at hand—and here I can hardly resist the temptation of transcribing a few lines, which, although the *poetry* is nothing better, perhaps, than what is termed “*dogrel rhymes*,” yet some of the *sentiments*, have often thrilled through my soul, attended with cheering emotions—:

“The time soon is coming, by the Prophets foretold,

“When Zion in purity, the world will behold ;

“For Jesus’ pure TESTIMONY, will gain the day,

“DENOMINATION SELFISHNESS will vanish away.

“It will then be discovered, who for Jesus will be,

“And who are in Babylon, the saints then will see ;

“The line of division, then will fully be known,

“Between the pure kingdom, and defil’d BABYLON.

“What beauty the church will then wear in the light,

“All governed by Jesus, who always leads right ;

“No spot in her countenance in that glorious day,

“Unnecessary ceremonies vanish away.

“But O, what a storm of persecution will rage—

“In the cause of old Babylon, too many engage ;

“Beholding their loss, and thus beginning to sink ;

“They’ll hope to obstruct the light from spreading, I think.

"But truth cuts its way, and love will melt down its foes;
 "The PURE WORD OF GOD, will conquer all who oppose;
 "The church stand in purity, in peace and in love,
 "In sight of her enemies, she rises above."

My dear brother—I wish to repeat, that I have the fullest confidence, that the present organization will never be reformed; but will grow worse and worse, until the judgments of God sweep it away. Why then, should those who have their eyes open, to see the present state of things, as I believe many have, spend their time and labor in fruitless toil, and thus have the whole, *worse than lost*, to the cause of God and truth. Will they suffer the thoughts of the *property*, which they have invested in various ways, to support the present organization, to hinder them? They ought to remember, that the primitive saints, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods for the sake of truth. It is not likely, that during the lives of the apostles, a single meeting house was built, for the especial accommodation of Christians—and, no marvel, if those who shall compose the army, that will be finally instrumental in leading the church out of the wilderness should be reduced to similar circumstances. No doubt Babylon will hold on upon all the *property* if possible, and selfish sectarians will cling to it like *burnacles* to the bottom of an old condemned ship. After the valuable cargo is removed in apprehension of her soon going to the bottom:—but will those who have eyes to see, 'tarry on the plain,' on the account of property which they have to leave in the hands of their opposers if they flee? But the loss of reputation—*that* is the greatest pinch after all. Well let them think of my dreadful fall, and take warning in view of the truth so clearly illustrated by it—viz:—"That he who will save his reputation shall lose it!" Let them speedily come down into the valley of humiliation lest with a terrible stroke they are "knocked down."

I remain most affectionately Yours,
 HAY POTTER.

LETTER XXII.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison*,) DEC. 28TH. 1837.*My dear Brother :—*

Before I close these communications, I wish to call your attention once more, *distinctly*, to what I have so often already alluded—viz: the *meagre, imperfect* and *unscriptural* views, that generally prevail of the *gospel* of Christ. It appears to me *now*, as plain as day, that there is a great *chasm* in the preaching and theological writing, of the present day; occasioned by not prominently holding up *Christ crucified*—or the great and glorious doctrine of the forgiveness of sins through the atoning blood of the Lord Jesus. Much has been said and written, on the perfections of God the Father—and *well* said: but, in respect to the office work of the Son, as Mediator, Redeemer and Savior of sinners, there has in my estimation been a great failure, in properly holding him up to view. Although, it ought to be admitted, that on some other points of theology, there has been much *gained*, as it respects clearness of exhibition, within a hundred years; yet, in respect to this point, of *preaching Jesus* and through him the forgiveness of sins, there has, I think within that time been a great and soul chilling falling off. Now, we are commanded to honor the *Son* as we honor the Father. He is “the way the truth and the life.” “No man can come unto the Father but through his atoning blood.” “There is no other name given under heaven nor among men, whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus.” The *law*, most certainly ought to be held up to view—and its righteous claims insisted upon: and all of the perfections of God, as Creator and Governor of the moral and natural world presented to the minds of men:—but, all of *this* may

be done and still, the great doctrine of the atonement—the cross of Christ, be kept out of sight. The fact is, we are a world of *sinners*; and, we need not only to be made *better*, or, to be brought from a state of sin and unholiness, to a state of holiness, in order to be saved; but, we need the *forgiveness* of our *past* sins, or the justice of God must forever shut us out of heaven. Some, seem to think, that what is meant by preaching Christ is preaching that men ought to reform or amend their ways by following the *example* of Christ, &c. That men ought to amend their ways and become Christ like; and that they must do so in order to be saved, is most evident:—and that if we *separate* this work, from the forgiveness of sins, in the plan of salvation, we run into the depths of Antinomianism is true—yet, is this all? Must not our past sins be forgiven in order to our salvation, as well as for our hearts to be made better? Most surely:—but what is the *ground* of this forgiveness? Why surely the sufferings and blood of Jesus. Now the regenerating or making us *holy* is the office work of the Holy Spirit—the third person in the trinity; but the *forgiveness of our sins*, or our *justification* is through the office work of the Son—as Mediator—as our GREAT SACRIFICE for this purpose; acceptable to God. I do not mean to intimate, that the work of the Spirit is too much insisted upon.* No; nor so much as it should be, but, that the great atonement—the forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Jesus, has to a fearful extent, been left *out of sight*. Now unto *Christ crucified* for sinners, all the sacrifices under the law were pointing: and, indeed, by the offering of sacrifices he had thus been preached

* The whole church of God, need to awake to this subject also---I mean of the out-pouring of the spirit of God. The meagre views and unbelief, which generally prevail respecting it, are truly affecting, and must be grievous to God. I believe that God will yet shew those that are considered, and may consider themselves, the great and mighty among his professed people, that he will introduce the latter-day-glory, not by their "might nor strength, but by his spirit's power."

from the day of Abel to his appearance in the flesh. After he thus made his appearance, he himself made *this* the prominent subject in his public ministry; and so did the Apostles. No one can candidly read the new Testament, and be ignorant of this. Indeed, *this* was the import of the Commission—"And that REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME among all nations beginning at Jerusalem." How well the Apostles and primitive preachers understood this commission, you can but perceive in reading the acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. They constantly *thus* preached Jesus. No sooner was Paul converted than he began to *preach Christ*; and so completely was he wedded to this blessed doctrine, that he told the people that he would "Know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Now my brother, can you not see, that there is at the present time and indeed since you have begun to notice preaching at all, a great, a lamentable *lack* touching this infinitely important subject—this very *soul* of the gospel? I think so:—and it shews the *Phariseism* of the age. And here, I wish to call your attention to one subject which *needs* attention. In all the movements of moral reform at present going on—such as the Anti-Slavery—Temperance cause &c. not one of them *necessarily* brings into view this doctrine of the forgiveness of sins.—For, observe: the Temperance advocate in his lectures *condemns* the sin of drunkenness—and persuades the drunkard to reform—which is all right—just as it should be:—but, then, he says nothing about the *forgiveness* of his *past* sins. Now, although the drunkard do reform; yet, if he do not obtain *forgiveness* of his *past* sins, through the blood of Jesus, he must after all go down to hell! So also with the Anti-Slavery lecturer—the Moral Reform lecturer &c. Well, what shall we do? Stop condemning these sins and cease exhorting those who have been guilty of them to repent? God forbid; but insist on these points *more urgently* than ever:—but mind, *here is the point*:—While the demands of the *law* are insisted upon, condemning slavery,

intemperance, licentiousness &c. let the *gospel way of forgiveness* also, be presented—for, if you do not do this, if your preaching has *any* effect, it will be almost certain to turn the transgressor from his former course, of open transgression into a *self righteous* Pharisee—and by pursuing this course of preaching the law, (and not *fully* preaching it neither,) and leaving out the gospel doctrine of forgiveness, has the present generation, in my opinion, *drifted* away from the great “Ensign”—whose “rest is so glorious,” I mean Jesus, the sinner’s only hope, into the “gulph stream” of Phariseism! I believe, my brother, that this is the true state of the case—which will ere long, be confessed by the people of God, let them think as they will of me. Now, although, reforms in respect to different moral subjects, are so loudly called for, yet we may reform, and reform until the day of our death, and leave out the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins, through the *blood of Jesus*, and all that will be gained by it, will be to turn out *black* devils and take in *white* ones!—and that the white ones are the most *dangerous*, is evident, from the expression of Jesus to the Pharisees—telling them, that Publicans and Harlots should enter into the kingdom of heaven before they. With all of my looking at moral and religious subjects before my fall, I never once thought of this great and *radical* defect, which now appears so clear to me. Nor do I know that it has awakened the attention of any one in these days. Depend upon it, God will have his son *honored* in dying for sinners. Unto Jesus, every knee must finally bow—and we ought ever to remember, that his blood is as valuable to every soul, that finally is ever saved from this fallen world, as hell, with its unutterable, eternal torments is dreadful. And will God own us, if this corner stone of the whole gospel building, is left in the back ground? No, he will not. Now I was brought to believe in Jesus more than twenty years ago—and, although I ever maintained the theory of the forgiveness of sins through his atoning blood, yet I greatly failed in respect to a *lively* sense of its importance; and very much

drifted with the self-righteous current of the age; but when I come to fall, as I have done, and to be looked upon, not merely as a *nominal*, but a *real* sinner, then was I led to contemplate this subject, as I had never habitually done before, and my eyes were opened, to see the great departure from the primitive mode of preaching Jesus, which I have in the course of these communications so frequently called your attention to. A certain person in the City of New York, greatly engaged in the different subjects of moral reform, when conversed with respecting this point, not a long time since, made the striking remark—"That it was possible that most of us have got our religion to learn over again"—and I say my brother, that *one* thing must be learned by the most eminent reformers of the day—viz: That if they do not honor the SON of God, as the SACRIFICE—the propitiation for our sins, in all of their movements, *God will not honor them*. This my fall has brought me to see—and who knows but what that is one thing, which infinite wisdom had in view in permitting it.

I remain most affectionately Yours,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XXIII.

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison*,) FEB. 6TH. 1838.

My dear Brother :—

Many reflections in connection with my fall, present themselves to my mind, which I have not yet adverted to; nor can I but briefly glance at *some* of them—as these communications have already been protracted beyond my anticipations, and perhaps beyond the bounds of your *patience* in the perusal. I wish, however, to call your attention to two or three other points:

And first:—I think, that by my fall, a severe blow has been inflicted upon what may be termed, *Phrenological pride*. You know, that at the present time, the science of *Phrenology*, is receiving great attention in this country, and multitudes are exceedingly enamored with it. Now

I do not pretend to condemn the science *itself*—or, a proper use of it. I think it *may* be correct, in ascertaining what, in my homely phraseology, may be termed, the *natural disposition* of persons. It may be thought, that in my case, the Phrenologist shot wide of the mark, in respect to my native conscientiousness. But, as I have before intimated, if every thing *could be known*, in respect to the circumstance connected with my fall, I am persuaded that all candid persons would acknowledge, that though some of his expressions are too strong, yet they are *generally* correct. Indeed, there are some things in connection with this awful conflict between the flesh and spirit—between conscientiousness and warring passion, which, if stated, would undoubtedly, receive but little credit—and the probability is, that I must lie under the imputation all my days, of being guilty of some things, of which the light of eternity will prove me innocent. But let that pass. It is not the science *itself*, or, a proper use of it, against which I would bear testimony—although, as I have once and again intimated, I would not vouch for its correctness. But the *use* which is generally made of it, I greatly fear, is most pernicious to the spiritual welfare of mankind. I think that where it is believed, and heartily entered into, by those whom it *flatters*, with what is termed, good developments, it *affords the most ample nourishment to self-righteousness*, of any thing which floats upon the scientific waters of the present age. Those, who as I said, are flattered by it, will be almost sure, without an *abundance* of grace to prevent, to substitute their good HEADS, for good HEARTS! The truth is, that *every person in the world*, before regeneration by the spirit of God, has a *heart* entirely sinful—"deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." No matter what the natural disposition for generosity, conscientiousness, &c. is—the heart is wholly corrupt—not only *destitute* of holiness, but *full of evil*. But how difficult to bring men into the belief of this? And how sure are they to build on what I term, the *natural disposition*, as something that will avail them, in the

sight of a holy God, instead of perfect holiness, and the atoning blood of Jesus? And here is the danger of the use, which I fear is frequently made of Phrenology—it feeds this disposition, and consequently helps men on to destruction! O let them look at my case and beware!—Surely, if any one might build on their Phrenological character, I might be allowed some hope on that score. But what does it avail me now for justification in the sight of man? much more in the sight of God. Let all rest assured, that a fine Phrenological *head*, will avail them nothing in the eternal world; but if they die without new hearts, and justification through the atoning blood of Jesus, they must be forever lost—while many a converted thief, adulterer and murderer, through the *grace of God*, will shine in the New Jerusalem as the brightness of the firmament, and the stars forever and ever.

You may now more clearly see the propriety of my presenting to your view, in a former communication, my Phrenological character. As I have already said, one prominent object in these communications, is, to aim as fatal a blow at *self-righteousness* as I can:—and what can be more effectual in killing it, so far as means are concerned, in those who are proud of their Phrenological characters, than to look at mine, and then to think of my fall!

Another subject, which I cannot forbear to mention in connection with my fall, is the development of *Colonization hearts*, possessed by many *pretended* opposers of that scheme. You know what I mean by Colonizationism:—that scheme which was invented, and still is zealously advocated by many—that the *colored man*, ought not to be permitted to dwell in the same country with the whites, on terms of *equality*: and from hence they must be *colonized in Africa*. There is no doubt, but what *pride* and wicked *prejudice*, are the main spring of this system. William Lloyd Garrison, has most successfully attacked it. It may be difficult for you to conceive, how sensibly I have been made to feel the *same principles*, applied to me since my fall—and this too, by multitudes of professed abolitionists.

They would say they could *forgive* me—but then they wanted me a *great way off*—I must leave the country—they did not want me near them—and in short, I must be COLONIZED. Never before, did I know how to feel for the poor colored man—nor never before, was I so fully imbued with Anti-Slavery principles. I am shunned—scorned—and trodden under foot, as much as they are.—But the excuse is, I have sinned. Yes, there must always be some *pretence* for justification, in the exercise of such a spirit. So had the prodigal son sinned—yet when he was a *great way off*, his father ran and *met* him—fell on his neck and kissed him—and brought him into *his house*;—was this colonizing him because he had sinned? This is the way that *God* deals with those, who, however they have been degraded, return to him, and implore his forgiveness—I ask again, does this look like colonization?—Their excuse I say, for colonizing me is, I have sinned.—Well, have not they sinned? According to their own theory then, they must all be colonized, *far away from the presence of God, and the holy Angels!* Perhaps they will be ready to say, that my theory is good, but it will not do to reduce it to practice. So say the pro-slavery folks, in answer to abolitionists! And does not the abolitionist retort—“It is most absurd, to talk of a *good theory*, that would be *bad in practice?*” It is often said, by those who are determined to degrade the negro, because of the color of his skin—that he, (the negro,) does not wish to associate on equal terms with the whites? I understand the reason *now*, as I never did before. He feels all the while, as if the proud white man, is *burdened with his company*. No wonder that he had rather be by himself, than be in company, that is burdened with him, and ashamed of him. So say I—and from hence, I greatly desire, that none will come near me, nor invite me near them, who would thus be burdened and ashamed. A respectable colored man from Boston, being in London, called on a family, with whom he had been acquainted in this country,—as it happened at the moment, the family were at breakfast. After

getting through eating themselves, the woman most hypocritically feigned, that she had forgotten to ask the colored man to breakfast, and complacently asked him, if he would not take a cup of coffee, "I thank you madam," replied the *slighted* colored man, "I am engaged this morning to dine with the Prince Regent!" My dear brother—since these great opposers of colonization have colonized *me*—I trust I have many a time, feasted with the Prince of glory, and in his palace, I hope to dwell forever! I will only add, that the course pursued towards me, has been remarkably calculated, to hinder others from an honest confession of sin. The gracious God holds out the greatest possible encouragements, to those who humbly confess and forsake their transgressions. Look at the admirable parable, of the prodigal son. Here is an illustration, of the *universal* conduct, of our gracious and merciful Heavenly Father, towards all returning, confessing and imploring sinners — Behold what a contrast between the conduct of God, and the conduct of man, in my case. Not only have I been visited by the mob with vengeance, under the cloak of shewing indignation at my sin, when it is evident, they were only letting loose their wrath upon me, on account of my *previous* religious course, but, I have *no doubt* but some high official characters, in their proceedings against me, have acted on the same principle. If I should give a history, of the whole *judicial* and *legislative* proceedings, in relation to my case, together with my *imprisonment*, as I think I may feel it my duty yet to do, I assure you, that there would be a developement of most astounding facts, going fully to establish the point. You know that the grand objection, with some of the members of the Legislature, for granting my petition for liberation was—my time was not out—they were afraid of interfering with the decisions of the supreme court—and yet they liberated a prisoner from the same cell in which I am confined, nine months before his time was out! I rejoiced in God that he was liberated; yet, it shews that the reason, which they *pretended* to give, was not the true one. Some of them were honest enough

to give the true reason—they were inexorable towards me, because I was a minister! Thus you see them legislating against a man, not in reference to his crime, but in reference to his *religious views*. It may be said, that this makes the crime, or sin the greater. It may be—but, not in any way the *civil authorities* can recognize it as such.. Have the civil authorities any thing to do with a man's religious views in the punishment of crime? or in legislating against him? If they have, then *vice versa*—they may with the *same propriety*, legislate a *bounty* to men, on the same principle; and indeed, support ministers by law. Is this the pretended theory of Rhode Island, in Judicial and Legislative affairs? But this principle has been *openly* adopted by *some*. I have their names:—and it all goes to prove, what I have before, again and again asserted, that, the severity of the proceedings against me, has not been for “my transgression.” No—but on the same principle that Shimei cursed David, and the Philistines put out Sampson's eyes. Were they horror struck, because of Sampson's transgression, in his connexion with Delilah? No! they were *glad of it!* for, thereby they had got him in their power. But their hatred to him was, because under divine direction and influence, he had slain a thousand of their number with the jaw bone of an ass, and otherwise made havoc among them. So in my case, in respect to thousands of my most inveterate opposers, in *high* and *low* places. It is not the *sin* that grieves them—but I verily believe, they are GLAD OF IT; for by it, they think they have got me in their power! O God strengthen me ere I die. But how magnanimous was the conduct of many members of the Legislature, when compared with such a principle of action? And the magnanimity of some, was the more conspicuous, from the fact that before my fall, I had much opposed their course. A number of the members used great exertions for my liberation. I shall ever remember them, with humble gratitude. May God be merciful to them, as they were disposed to shew mercy to me. You have no doubt, learned, that the last vote. on

liberating me, was a *tie*, by the Speaker's voting against me. How it was *untied*, I know not, as I am ignorant of Parliamentary rules. This last vote, was on the petition of my wife. After the rejection of my petition the day before, to be liberated on the first of March—she went home, and without my knowledge, wrote a petition for herself—and determined on carrying it into the Legislative hall.—Great handle was made of her appearance there, by those whose turn it served, to raise prejudice against my liberation—and much was said by the *Speaker** and others, respecting their being so much troubled with my petitions.—But my brother, all who finally get to heaven, will have learned, that in order to obtain mercy, we must be *importunate*. But with all of our importunities, mercy was denied me and my family. There is a passage of scripture, which sometime or other, will be found true by every person, *high and low*, who *continues* unmerciful, to their sorrow. “They shall have judgment without mercy, who shew no mercy.” Nevertheless, I think I see the goodness of God to me, in overruling this determination, to inflict the last jot and tittle of vengeance upon me. If I had been liberated before my sentence expired, there would have been another pretence for further violence—but now, after having been spurned from the feet of God's professing peo-

* Yet this same *SPEAKER*, was very earnest for granting the petition of Archippus's party, for an alteration of the Charter of the SOCIETY, by which a large portion of the church that were friendly to me, would be thrown out of *PROPERTY*, which the Legislature had given them the privilege to purchase and hold. He need not go *MUCH* further, to raise a suspicion, that he descended from the dignity of a Legislator, and become a mere *PARTISAN*, in the difficulty existing in the society; and was willing, not only to insist on carrying things to the very extremity, in respect to my imprisonment, but to inflict *EXTRA* vengeance on me and my friends, by legislating away their *PROPERTY*. First make a law, impowering persons to buy property, and then make a law to tear it from them, without compensation!!! But this was too *BARE-FACED*: and I understood that Mr. Speaker stood nearly alone in this attempt.

ple—after having been mobbed in almost an unparalleled manner—and after having suffered to the very extent of the law, *imprisonment*, the person, who after all this shall assault me, will write DEMON legibly on his own forehead.

But finally, I ask you, if the great extremity to which things have been carried towards me, after confessing my sin, and humbling myself before God and man, is not contrary to the conduct and commands of God? and calculated to *hinder* persons from making an honest confession? I cannot say that I am *disappointed*. I expected that all would be done, that earth and hell could effect, to utterly destroy me. Nevertheless, I determined, in full view of it, to make a confession. I would advise all to do the same. If I had been disposed to have *lied* about this affair, I should have denied the *whole* at the outset—and I think that the prospect was as good, for my being credited in such a denial, as most of men:—for, indeed, many would hardly believe the fact, *after my own confession*. But I am not a liar. *That* is not my character. I am not a hypocrite—I appeal to God: and let those who thus accuse me, prepare for a final settlement of these points, before his awful bar. **THE FINAL RECKONING IS YET TO COME!**

Your Affectionate Brother,

RAY POTTER.

LETTER XXIV.

PROVIDENCE, (*in Prison*), FEB 10TH, 1838.

My dear Brother:—

You may have expected, that in the communications which I have been making you, I should have spent more time in warning others to beware of the sin by which I have fallen. I would ask you what I can *say* that will equal the *sight* of the *catastrophe* for effect. If at the foot of a precipice you *see* an incautious traveller, by his folly and wickedness dashed in ruins, will an *oration*

on his folly be more moving to your feelings—more convincing to your judgment than the *sight* of the wretched man groaning in the most excruciating agonies; if peradventure, life be not already extinct? No! and if the spectacle which men have before them in my “great and dreadful fall,” will not induce them to watch against the “lust of the eye” and the very *beginnings* of sin which lead to such awful results, then nothing which I can say will avail any thing. No; nor would they hear though one should rise from the dead. I will therefore close these communications. You well remember, with what seriousness, as long ago as last May, you advised me to write. I knew of no way in which I could comply, so well as to adopt the method which I have here taken. I wrote a little and lingered:—for, a thousand discouragement growing out of my *peculiar situation* seemed to rise up before me. After I was thrown into prison, however, I felt clearer in my mind to communicate to you those views which I have now presented. As I have already hinted my *object* has been to make use of myself and the circumstances connected with my fall, to exhibit truth—and truth too, which it seems to me is almost buried out of sight by the Phariseism or self-righteous spirit of this generation. If I know my own heart I am not fighting exclusively my *own* battles. In pursuing the course which appeared to me the surest way to make *truth* appear glorious by contrasting it with *error*, I have been obliged to speak of the errors of *others*, as well as my *own*. This, has caused me much pain:—especially in portraying the conduct of *some* individuals, members of the church of which I was formerly pastor. But I saw, that I must do it, or the developments growing out of the whole, so important to the cause of truth, must be lost—and the doctrine of selfish expediency in opposition to *christian duty* left to triumph. These persons boldly took their *stand* on this doctrine—refused after many entreaties and warnings to renounce it, but seemed to bid defiance to the power of truth to move them. What could a lover of truth do in such a case but to do a

I have done? I *knew of no other way*. I bear them no ill will. I write not from a spirit of malice or revenge. I wish well to all. I pity my worst enemies: with unfeigned pity—and I adore my Savior that he gives me a disposition to love and pray for them. I desire that you may do the same. I hope that you will harbor no wrong spirit towards those, whose conduct in the course of these letters has been shewn to be inconsistent with the commands of God and spirit of Christ. I hope a number of them have been partakers of the grace of God; but they have been bewildered by the doctrine of expediency. Let us pray for them, that they may be delivered from this snare of the devil.—And now my dear brother would I again remind you that in writing what I have, I have not been unmindful of my *own great sinfulness*. No! a sense of it constantly attends me. Words can never express the overwhelming anguish of soul which I have experienced in view of my great transgression. If it were not for a commensurate view, which I have of the *infinite* mercy of God, through the atoning blood of Jesus, I should be instantly buried in deep and hopeless despair. Nor do I feel humbled in view of this one sin alone. No—I see *many* things, in my past life, which deeply affect me with sorrow. As to the stand which I have taken in relation to the various causes which I have advocated, I feel no condemnation—but I have not advocated them as I ought. I feel greatly condemned that in my reproofs there was not mingled more of the spirit of *compassion* for transgressors. I too much indulged in *wit* when speaking of solemn and sacred things. I have spent too much time in the *streets* conversing on that which profited not and have been far too much engaged in poring over political papers—the contents of which are frequently deleterious to piety in the soul. I greatly erred and *sinned* in making my religious visits so *disproportionate*—visiting more than I ought at some places and greatly and sinfully neglecting others. If it were possible, I would personally ask forgiveness of every person that I have ever injured or grieved: and nothing, no

nothing would afford me greater satisfaction than to make all, four fold restitution. So far as I can be heard, I desire to say to every person young and old who has ever seen *ought* in my christian walk incompatible with the commands of God—*I sincerely repent, do forgive me.* I know my wanderings have been many, my sins numerous and great. I *loathe* them; *not* because I fear that for them I may sink to hell, for I feel that God has forgiven me of all my iniquities:—but I *loathe* them because they have been committed against a Good God, have injured his cause and my fellow men. As it is not probable that I shall ever see all again on earth who have formerly known me, I wish most sincerely if this communication is published that all persons whose eyes shall rest upon it will consider themselves here addressed *personally* and *individually*: and are requested to hear my *voice* from these lines crying to them—*I repent, forgive me.*

My dear brother—God knows that I speak the unaffected feelings of my *heart*, the real sentiments of my *soul*.—Already have I “laid my body in the dust”—and *there* I remain. Let it be well understood, I take not the ground of a denial, extenuation, and palliation of my sins. No—God forbid—but with the most sincere confession—with the most hearty repentance, and with the fullest determination to sin no more, I throw myself at the feet of Jesus depending alone on the mercy of God through his atoning blood. I rest alone on the great and merciful doctrine of forgiveness. I have no *other* hope—but, in this position I *have* hope. I should be hypocritical to deny it. I cannot say as an Irish orator said, in view of death—‘that he was shielded from the fear of it, by a consciousness of his own rectitude;’ but I *can* say, that in view of death and judgment, I am shielded by the promises of God, to save the chief of sinners, who forsake and repent of their sins, and believe with all their hearts, on the Lord Jesus Christ.—Unto such, God says—“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”—*this is my shield.* Unto

such, God says—"I, even I, am HE that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins"—*this is my shield*. Unto such, God says—"I have blotted out as a THICK CLOUD, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee"—*this is my shield*. Unto such, God says—"He forgiveth all thine iniquities, he healeth all diseases;" and that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his son cleanseth from all sin:" and what does a poor sinner need more, to shield him from the wrath of God, and the accusations of men. This, is my hope. I repeat it; and on this foundation, laid in Zion for the hope of the *guilty*, do I rest my poor, guilty, bruised, heavy-laden and weary soul. You cannot but see, my dear brother, that those who put their feet on me *here*, put their feet, *not on me*, but on the *great atonement*—the glorious gospel—the blood of the everlasting covenant! I stand with the despised, penitent, publican—the penitent thief—Manassah, David! God says, in respect to such as turn away from all of their sins, and keep all of his statutes—"All his transgressions that he hath committed, **THEY SHALL NOT BE ONCE MENTIONED UNTO HIM**"—*this is my shield*. Unto this strong tower—loathing all sin, and breathing after the perfect image of God, do I resort, and feel that I am safe. But if the test of penitence be, that because I have sinned *myself*, I must necessarily be insensible to the sins of others, then have I *no* penitence. For, although I feel *myself* to be the *chief* of sinners, yet in proportion to the deep *self* loathing, which I feel on account of my *own* sins, my moral vision is brightened, and I can but loathe sin, let me see it where I will: and, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh: but, you know, that the sweeping evidence, which some have brought against my being penitent, is *this very thing*: and you can but see that the legitimate inference of the doctrine, is, *that no man who has ever sinned himself, can rebuke his neighbor, without giving infallible proof, that he is himself impenitent!* If this doctrine is true, then I *am* impenitent. I want no such penitence as this implies. I

believe there is no *real* penitence in it. Hatred of sin, will never induce its approval in any shape or being.—These are my views, dear brother, of penitence. Such penitence, as induces loathing of sin in myself, and wherever I see it, I trust I am exercised with. I am conscious, that from henceforth, I shall be “numbered with transgressors.” I *am* a transgressor. I am *ashamed* of my transgressions. I mourn over them. O that I could do good to my fellow-men I am no Antinomian. I acknowledge the moral law of God, to be most righteously binding upon me. That every transgression of it is a sin, that deserves eternal punishment; yet, I as fully believe that “God can be *just*, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” The most of *preaching*, which I have ever done since my fall, is to talk of the *great Savior*, to three or four prisoners, with me in this loathsome cell. For a long time after I came here, I did not get confidence even to do that. I supposed that they looked upon me as self-righteous professors do—and I determined to keep silence. But God seemed powerfully to impress my mind, to pray vocally with them, and to persuade them to seek Jesus.—With what readiness did they listen! O what a pity it is, that there are no more, to feel and act for the poor, outcast prisoner. While the proud, and Pharisaical, rolling in worldly ease and honors, reject the message of salvation, I believe there are many in prisons, if properly dealt with, who would hear with grateful hearts. O how grace will shine, in bringing such to heaven. I hope ere long, through the mercy of God, to be delivered from prison, and to have the pleasure of laboring with my hands for the support of my afflicted family. I was doing so, when carried to prison. Two things I desire—first: not to visit where I should be a burden, nor secondly: to urge those to visit me, who would feel disgraced by my company.—From hence, I keep much alone. I cannot express to you, the sense which I have of your brotherly kindness, to me, in my disgraced and wretched condition. I have views of the designs of God, in respect to me, which I will

not here disclose. Of one thing am I sure, that in *the end* my fall will be a *loss* instead of a gain; to satan and his children. God will glorify himself, and ultimately perfect his church in holiness and happiness: and what can I desire more. Although I have greatly sinned—greatly wandered and fallen, yet the great day of eternity, I am fully assured, will satisfy all of my former friends, that may not be satisfied before, that in respect to the *main thing*—my being a child of God, *they have not been deceived in me.*—No my brother—I have not been—I am not now as many would make me to be—root and branch a hypocrite. It has been said by some, that I had better let others say this—but I feel as if I must here once more inscribe it, and that too for eternity! I believe you will readily admit, that my life has been marked with extraordinary vicissitudes—and but few perhaps, have suffered more—but one thing in the close, I wish you to *distinctly understand*—that I do not think hard of God: or that I have suffered more at *his* hands than I deserve. God forbid. So far from *such* a state of mind, I feel that it is infinite grace and mercy alone, that has preserved me from an eternal hell. I feel that the rod has been good for me: that by it, I am brought nearer to my God, and delivered from the power of sinful propensities, which hitherto, have greatly burdened, perplexed and hindered me, in the service of God. Not that I have already attained perfection in holiness, but I press forward for the mark of the prize, of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. In heaven at last I hope to rest my weary soul! There dear brother, I hope to meet *you*; and all the “sanctified host of God’s elect:” and join them in saying, “Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb”—forever—Amen.

I remain most affectionately Yours,

RAY POTTER.

APPENDIX.

THE FOLLOWING ARE MR. POTTER'S FIRST CONFESSIONS*

To the dear Church formerly under my care.

I dare not address you as brethren; not but what I feel confident that I am a Christian, but because what I have done, will place me in such a light, that you would be unwilling to own me as a brother. I have sinned, I have fallen! Six months ago, I committed a great sin—temptation had followed me Ten Yearst and in an hour of *distraction* with temptation, I did that which has thrown me from my standing, as a minister of the Gospel, into the depths of reproach and shame, in the sight of God and man. After committing this sin, I earnestly sought forgiveness of God by humility and repentance, and have I trust found it freely—and as I did not know what the effect of my sin was, I continued my religious duties, in hopes that it would never be known, to bring such a wound upon the cause of God, and shame and disgrace upon me and others. But God has ordered it otherwise, and it is therefore my duty to make a confession, as public as will be my sin. It will, I know, appear strange, that I have appeared to enjoy religion lately. But a sense of my sin brought me down,

*As these confessions were only at first, designed for the neighborhood where the scene took place, the sin which was adultery, is not named.

†According to James 1 ch. 14 verse.

and God condescended to bless me. But as was the case of David, so with me: after God put away his sin, he suffered it to come to light, and he was sorely troubled on account of it. It is impossible for me to express my anguish. At some future time, I shall express myself more fully. I only now say, that I humble myself before you as a Church, and every individual. I confess my sin. Do with me as seemeth good in your sight. If it can be thought consistent with the glory of God, I beg a place as a private member of the church. But if not, let God's will be done. If I might plead as a beggar, I would say, have pity on my poor family, have pity on **** *****. I must be overwhelmed in disgrace. I deserve it. I complain not, let what will come. God is glorified in my degradation—in that I have comfort. I want to get a place to go to work with my hands, for my poor family. If any of you could find any work for me, I should take it as a favor. I write no more.

The most of this was written two days ago, but I was advised not to make it known unto you, thinking the case might not be as it was feared. But being now satisfied, I lose no further time. O God, I submit to thy awful rebuke, to let hell rejoice over me for a season. I bow under the dispensation without a murmur. I would fondly hope, that it may be a warning to all to resist temptation. I have been followed by this temptation more than ten years, and at last I fell! And I fell by not watching and praying as I ought. I ask forgiveness of God, of you, of the people in this place; of all the world.

RAY POTTER.

If you would not consider me as trying to palliate my sin, I would add, that I never premeditated doing what I have done. Read this in public.

P. S. I hope the church will cling together—love one another—God will send you a preacher—until you get one, be content with conference meetings. O if I may but have the privilege of seeing you blessed; and ringing your bell—making your fires &c.

To the First Baptist Church in Freetucket.

Will you hear the confession of a wretched sinner? I have sinned and fallen. I fully believe, that I was truly converted years ago. I honestly engaged in trying to preach the gospel, but I have now sinned, and plunged myself into the deepest degradation, and wounded the cause of God in a most awful manner. I have for more than ten years, been harassed with unutterable temptations to indulge in this sin. Passion, like the subtle charmer, has kept drawing me to it; I have resisted and struggled; but after all I have given away—this took place nearly six months ago; after it I felt unutterable anguish. I humbled myself before God, and I trust found forgiveness; indeed, I felt to enjoy his favor, and as I did not know what the effect of my sin was, I kept along with my religious duties, in hopes that it never would appear, to wound the cause of religion. But as God has otherwise determined, I make public confession of my sin; this I did to the Church of which I am a member as soon as I knew the fact. When I look at it myself, I feel willing that God should glorify himself in my downfall, and a comfort that he is able to honor himself in my ruin; but when I look at the cause of God, at his children and at poor sinners, who would stumble over me into hell, my anguish is unutterable. But with my ruin, I feel deliverance from the power of that passion, which so long has raged, and finally overcome me.

I confess my sin to you, in the deepest anguish of my soul. I am sorry, I repent, O I repent, I ask forgiveness of the people of God; I ask forgiveness of the people of this place! I never expect to open my mouth again by way of preaching. No, but my life must be spent in confession. I can truly say, that I feel as willing to have public condemnation, as once I did public praise. Truth requires me to say I never premeditated this sin. But I have done it, I offer no palliation. Do with me as seemeth good in your sight; only remember that I humble myself at your feet. God pity me, a poor, ruined man.

RAY POTTER.

There being a few pages of the last form not filled, some of Mr. Potter's communications to his friends, during his imprisonment are here inserted.

IN PRISON, Nov. 1st. 1837.

Beloved Brethren and Sisters:—

My mind is often exercised with a most intense desire—a desire which beggars all description—to make amends for the injury done others, by my sins and my fall. I sit here in prison, and ruminate—how gladly would I give them money if I had it—although I know this would not fully recompense them. Yet it seems as if it would afford me inexpressible satisfaction, to deal out to them temporal blessings. I used to feel but little solicitude, to possess this world's goods. I now greatly desire an abundance to give away. But alas! so far from being able to do that, I am dependant, under God, for every mouthful of food, on others. But God knows my heart. He knows the *sorrow* of my heart, for my sin against him, and the injuries I have inflicted on others. He knows how gladly I would make amends, if possible. He knows that there is not a person on earth, that I would injure—and that I would do good to my most bitter enemies. There is one way, in which those who have been injured by me, may turn it into one of the greatest blessings—and that is, by shewing me mercy; by forgiving me. What an opportunity for them to act like Jesus, and to become surely interested, in some of his most precious promises—"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"—"Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." I must live on *grace alone*.—From God and man, I must live on *grace*. The longer I live, the greater debtor am I. Surely, if ever grace appeared to be grace, in the salvation of *any* sinner, it must appear so in *my* salvation. O how great and multiplied are my sins. But God hath said, though they be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Yes, I trust that he blotteth out my sins as a thick cloud.

RAY POTTER:

PROVIDENCE, (*In Prison*,) DEC. 8TH. 1837.

My dear Brethren and Sisters:—

“The angel of the Lord encampeth round about those that fear him and delivereth them.” What a glorious, precious, and comforting assurance is this—but not more so than true. You have found it so. Did not God deliver you last summer and fall, from the hand of the violent, and from those who, if *he* had not preserved you, would have swallowed you up? Yes, praised be his name. He hath delivered and doth still deliver you as Paul said. I believe he will make you a name and a praise in the earth—and that he will lift up your heads above all of your enemies. Be constant, beloved, and he will demonstrate in your case that “it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in Princes.” Let others trust in public sentiment—in popular favor—in large denominations—in splendid meeting houses—in rich and large churches, but let us *ever* remember the NAME of the Lord our God. I look upon you dearly beloved, as the excellent of the earth—a royal Diadem of our God. You seem to me very much assimilated to the character of those saints in olden time who wandered in goats skins and sheep skins and in dens and caves of the earth of whom the world was not worthy. O think of them now! dwelling in the *holy city* instead of dens and caves of the earth—in the presence of God and the Lamb! singing with holy Angels and rejoicing with joy unutterable. O think how soon you will be with them if you are converted to God. O Glory, glory, it fills me with rapture when I think of it. And can Jesus save me? Yes he is sufficient to save even me—though such a great sinner—though the chief of sinners—Jesus the friend of sinners—Jesus the friend of sinners—O tune the harp to his praise ye friends of his—adore him—praise him—exalt him—love him—cleave to him and serve him forever. Dearly beloved, abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul. Remember my dreadful fall and be forever warned. Love one another in the truth—be holy—

be spiritual. Bear one another's burdens dear brethren. I think much now of my dear brother ****. Let all pray for him. The Devil hates him no doubt and he will in various ways try to *frighten* him as well as to decoy him.— Pray to God for him—be mutual in your prayers. O the worth, the *infinite* worth of prayer. As often as you can, let two or three go away together, and pour out your souls before the Lord. As for myself, I have support from God. He has been better to me than all of my fears. O, his mercy to me since my fall has been higher than the clouds. *Don't forget me in your prayers.* I sometimes hope to be of great use and a lasting blessing to the church of God. You know that God is able to bring this about. Have faith; walk by faith; and trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. It is worth all which I have suffered, to see such friendship exhibited as has been by my dear friends since my fall. O what Christ like friendship. How it binds my heart stronger and stronger to you. I pray God to put it in my power to do you all great good. O I thirst for this. Pray that I may have this privilege. You are all poor; you have trials no doubt respecting your temporal concerns; but O, remember that the eye of God is upon you; your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all of these things. No good thing will he withhold from you. Make known your wants to God. How blessed it is to enjoy communion with Jesus. Seek this above all things. The hearts of all men are in the hand of God: What a glorious thought; Remember it, and remember that prayer moves that hand. O Glory to the infinite condescension of the great God; he listens to the prayers of mortals; yes, to your prayers. O pray, pray my dear precious friends in Jesus. What great things God may do through me in answer to your prayers. I will try to meet you this night at the throne of God's grace.

Your brother in tribulation;

RAY POTTER.

"Thus saith the Lord God, behold I lay in Zion for a *foundation*, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a *sure foundation*."

I have often thought of this passage—often quoted it, as you have no doubt heard me, and I have preached from it—but still, I know not that it was ever so applied to my soul, as within a few days. How true it is, that the spirit of God alone, can open scripture to our understanding, and apply it to our profit. Glorious foundation for a poor sinner. When the law thunders condemnation from Sinai to him, on account of his numerous and aggravating sins, and seems ready to sweep him down to hell, he flies to Christ, and finds in him a foundation, adequate to support his soul. Yes, "God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." "The blood of Jesus Christ his son, cleanseth from all sin." "Thanks be to God for this unspeakable gift," this sure foundation. When Satan accuses us, we fly to this foundation and find support,—When self-righteous Pharisees point at us, and call us sinners *above all men*, we say—God be merciful to us sinners, and rest our souls on Christ. *This foundation*. After all which can be thrown on me, by those who would sink me in despair, on this foundation I rest; and find support. I have no other refuge—no other hiding place—no other shield—no other rock of defence—no other horn of salvation—no other rest. Christ is all, and in all, and enough for my soul. In his death, and the shedding of his blood, the justice of God has its utmost demands, and if I am *in him*, I am covered from wrath. The eternal storm cannot fall upon me. O thanks be to God, for this foundation—laid in Zion, for poor sinners to build their hopes upon for eternity. Other foundation, can no man lay: and whosoever buildeth on it, shall not be ashamed—shall not make haste? This foundation, is indeed, a stumbling stone, and rock of offence, to the self-righteous; but it is elect and precious, in the sight of God, and all true believers. O what comfort I have this *moment*, in resting my weary soul upon it. Dearly beloveds—fly to it, and you *shall not be*


confounded. Sin shall not do it—Satan shall not do it—self-righteous Pharisees shall not do it—wicked men shall not do it—crosses shall not do it—disappointments shall not do it—persecutions shall not do it—prisons shall not do it—death shall not do it—no: nor the awful judgment. Precious foundation; sure foundation; broad foundation; deep foundation: *everlasting* foundation. Come, let us magnify it together—let us rejoice together—for through Christ, we are made more than conquerors over all our foes. Salvation, O the joyful sound! Sing, sing praises, praises to our God. Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain to redeem us. O what love—what grace—what mercy—what long-suffering—what condescension—what kindness; what preserving power is displayed towards us, by our gracious Redeemer. Everlasting praise to him. Glory, Glory, Glory. I feel happy in the God of my salvation.—O it seems to me, that I can almost unite with angels around the throne, in praising and blessing God and the Lamb. Pray to him, for he will hear you—Amen.

RAY POTTER.

In Prison, December 16th 1837.







Acme

Bookbinding Co., Inc.

100 Cambridge St.

Charlestown, MA 02129



3 2044 019 984 533

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT
RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR
BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

AUG 10 - 1982

AUG 7 - 1982

73708

REC'D 10 1982



